FIRST THINGS

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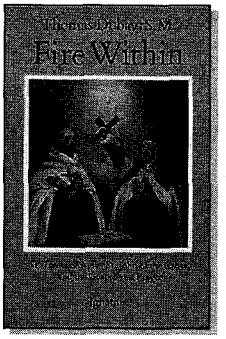

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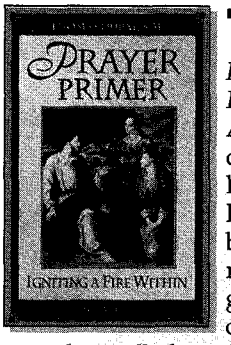

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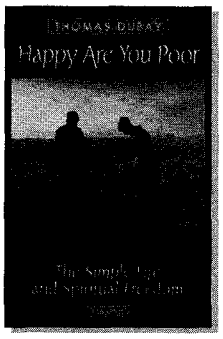

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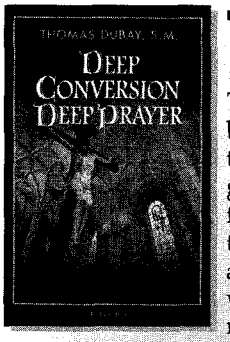

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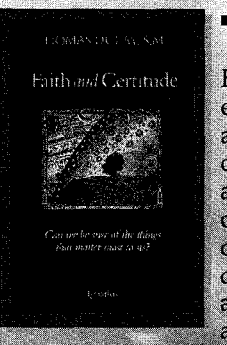

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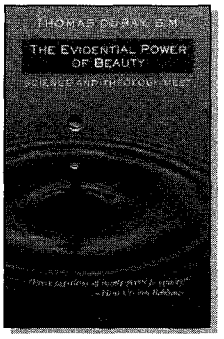

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First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $39 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** (877) 905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846.

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FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

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Rice That Springeth Green

Cynthia Grenier's review of Anne Rice's novel *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (February) is appalling as well as disengaged. My approach to Rice's book was hesitant, since I was cognizant of her oeuvre and am not an avid reader of the macabre. But her popularity and her return to the faith impelled me to take it up.

In Rice's invitation to suspend our endemic cultural skepticism, one discovers a tender meditation on the humanity of Jesus Christ, his self-emptying, and the essential virtue of humility—as well as a rediscovery of the profound sacredness of the person, including the person of the child. This book was written "on the knees" and is a challenge to those who regard themselves as scholar-theologians but who do nothing but dismember the historical Jesus, the Christ of faith.

In the book's artistry there is a kind of marriage of faith and reason, no less than in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, which may be important for the long-term conversation between secularism and faith. It is at least a competent response to our late Holy Father's invitation to artists to bring their talents to bear on the treasure of our Tradition.

One hopes that FIRST THINGS will revisit this rare and valuable contribution to contemporary reflection on our Savior, Jesus Christ.

James P. Nally
Edgewood, New Jersey

As a priest, a sometimes theologian, and a longtime friend of Anne Rice (and one who is blessed to have frequent discussions with her regarding theology and faith), I wish to address Cynthia Grenier's mean-spirited review.

First of all, Anne Rice does not claim to "channel" Jesus. *Christ the Lord* is essentially a work of fiction. As has been the case with each of her novels, the author did an incredible amount of research before writing: She studied not only the scriptures but also a diversified selection of traditional and contemporary commentaries and works on aspects of Jewish life in the time of Jesus. One who channels claims to serve as a medium for receiving and disseminating information from someone else. Rice does no such thing. Instead, she takes what we know from the scriptures, the apocryphal gospels, and contemporary historical accounts and fills in the gaps with "what might have happened."

Furthermore, it is more than a little cynical to say that Rice is "celebrating" her return to the faith by planning a trilogy "from the manger to the Cross." It has been my privilege to walk with Anne through part of her journey back to the faith. Her decision to write these books was not a matter of deciding how to celebrate that return; it was a response steeped in gratitude. Her desire to spread the story of Jesus is a natural way for a bestselling author to thank Jesus for His work in her life. A great musician would have written a symphony, and a master artist would have painted a painting. A writer using her God-given talents to give glory to God even at the potential cost of the loss of a segment of her readership should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Some allowance has to be made, I suppose, for differences in taste, but the beginning of Grenier's review

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bespeaks a predisposition to speak ill of the book because of the reviewer's assumptions and biases.

Rev. Joseph Cocucci
Cathedral of St. Peter
Wilmington, Delaware

Cynthia Grenier replies:

Far be it from me to criticize anyone who feels she may have found her salvation, but I would like to point out to the good Father Cocucci that sincerity and "an incredible amount of research" do not in themselves guarantee quality in any work of art. I fear I am still resolutely opposed to what Anne Rice chose—to use Father Cocucci's words—to fill in the gaps with "what might have happened." And I question how much greater glory is rendered unto God by this work of pop fiction.

While I am in sympathy with James P. Nally as to those who do nothing but dismember the historical Jesus, I find Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* a serious and worthy work. I cannot say as much for Anne Rice's work, no matter how noble her intentions.

Founding Religion

Michael Novak's "The Truth About Religious Freedom" (March) was somewhat out of focus. The Founders endorsed the Declaration of Independence's assertion that our rights are granted by the Creator, but how does one explain why this was discovered only in 1776? Since we were a weak, divided nation fighting the most powerful empire in the world, doesn't it seem likely that Jefferson asserted the "divine rights of the people" as a public-relations attack on the "divine right of kings"? Whatever the Creator had in mind, in the real world we acquired rights by defining them, asserting them, fighting for them, and building the machinery to protect them.

Novak writes that the First Amendment was designed to "prevent any one religion" from being established. But by 1787 single-church establishments had either disappeared or given way to "multiple establishments." As the Supreme Court noted in 1879 in the *Reynolds* decision, Jefferson was right when he wrote, with the concurrence of Attorney General Lincoln, that the First Amendment erected a wall of separation between church and state. Of course it took years to work out the bugs, but the Supreme Court was correct about separation in 1947 in *Everson* and later rulings.

Novak insults those whose ethics are based on naturalism rather than supernaturalism. Are religious injunctions against murder, theft, and bearing false witness valid because the Creator said so, or did religions credit the Creator with injunctions that people worked out from their experience of living in society?

Edd Doerr
President
Americans for
Religious Liberty
Silver Spring, Maryland

Michael Novak replies:

It is not clear to me what Edd Doerr means by "naturalism" and "supernaturalism." In the Catholic intellectual tradition, revelation and grace do "not take away from, but complete" nature and natural intellect. Furthermore, Madison and Washington both speak of new eras and new epochs and new discoveries. Thus, it is no mystery that, regarding the rights articulated in 1776, human beings make slow progress in understanding more deeply and clearly what earlier they believed only *in nuce*.

But the crux of the matter is that both Jefferson and Madison deliberately employed Christian language in articulating the "natural right" of religious liberty. Jefferson began his statute with a traditional Jewish and Christian declaration, "Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free"; and added that all restrictions upon it are "a departure from the plan of the Holy author of our religion." In a parallel way, in his famous "Remonstrance," Madison's opening sentence declares that "we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, 'that religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.'"

Nearly all our founders made *one* distinction between church and state and quite *another* between religion and republican government. With Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, they held that a true religion (one that insists on worship in spirit and in truth) is an indispensable support for republican government, and that (in Washington's words) "in vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert" religion and morality.

Meanwhile, they certainly agreed that the federal "congress shall make no law *respecting* an establishment of religion" (neither abolishing those establishments that still existed in some states nor imposing a new federal establishment). Nor should church officials make the decisions proper to the state. Between church and state, wise separation; but between religion and the republic, amicable accommodation.

For the long-suffering Mr. Doerr's further torment, a fuller version of my exposition is found in my book *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* and in a more recent inquiry, written with my daughter Jana, *Washington's God*, particularly in the section on religious liberty.

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Catholics and Universities

If I understand Stephen M. Fields ("The Civic University," March), he believes that America's continued relevance depends upon recapturing a rational public discourse about the foundations of this country. Fields writes that "the Catholic university presupposes a model congenial with the American proposition" and can lead the way to a renewal of the national conversation. I must reluctantly disagree. With the turmoil that still prevails in most Catholic universities, they are in no position to play host to this discourse. In fact, most Catholic universities are struggling to define whether they are "Catholic" at all and what exactly that might mean. Until an authentically Catholic identity is recaptured on the campuses of Catholic universities, they are in no position to live up to the task Fields proposes.

Marcel LeJeune
Director of Campus Ministry
St. Elizabeth's University Parish
Lubbock, Texas

Stephen M. Fields replies:

The impetus for my writing "The Civic University" was to encourage America's Catholic institutions of higher learning to put their houses in order. As I mentioned, leading commentators are decrying the Western university's capitulation to consumerism and ideology. These neglect the transmission of our rich cultural heritage, even while narrowing the plurality of perspectives that are the seedbed for new discoveries. Against these forces stands the Catholic university. Marcel LeJune suggests that post-Vatican II turmoil has corroded its ability to execute a distinctive social, cultural, and patriotic role.

All is not so grim. Surely our Catholic schools need to beef up *philosophia perennis* and resist converting theology into religious studies. But the example set by Notre Dame is showing that the message of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is bearing fruit. (I am not referring to the recently disheartening vacillation of Father Jenkins but to the article published several years ago in the *New York Times* entitled "Notre Dame Combining Research and Religion.")

Similarly, faculty discussion at Georgetown University has produced a model designed to implement *Ex Corde*. Called "centered pluralism," this model is based on the metaphor of intersecting circles. But the university's Catholicity intersects all the others. Governed by its own object and method, the act of faith mediated by the Church, this circle is not to be held hostage by the objects and methods of the secular disciplines, nor are they to be prejudiced by it.

The crucial point is that Catholicity, as the university's "center of centers," claims for itself important prerogatives. First is the right to govern the university by the Catholic understanding of the nature and purpose of the human person. Second is the right to enter into dialogue with all the endeavors of the university in appropriate ways. By exercising its prerogatives, Catholicism forestalls the reduction of knowledge into ideology. "Centered pluralism" can be effective only if faculty are hired across the disciplines who know the Catholic intellectual tradition and who can bring it into conversation with all manner of ideas. Now stepping forward are younger scholars trained in the era of John Paul II who are prepared to do just that.

The Underclass

In "On the Other Side of the Gates" (Public Square, March), Richard John Neuhaus speaks to the all-too-often ignored problem of the black underclass. He correctly points out that "there are a few black thinkers . . . who have, year in and year out, insisted that the healing of the black community—and, most particularly, of the black underclass—is primarily the responsibility of blacks."

The myopic presupposition of the modern civil rights movement that only externally-imposed factors contribute to the multifaceted problems of the black underclass reflects the fact that the present civil rights movement has failed to mature beyond its self-identification with opposition to the overt discrimination that it rightly sought to overthrow.

When the leaders of the movement continue to establish the fundamental identity of the black underclass as victimhood—though victimhood was (and in some cases still is) a palpable reality—but fail to honestly diagnose and address the problems within the black underclass, a defeatist, apathetic, and potentially hostile black underclass is the consequence.

Furthermore, the civil rights movement appears to many observers as a charade, especially given the tired bromides of the likes of Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, who consistently revert to the default position that society is always culpable when members of the black underclass engage in social malfeasance. Thus the very people that the movement is designed to assist remain in patterns of self-destructive behavior that inhibit the breaking of the shackles of generational poverty and broken families.

Is there hope for new leadership of the civil rights movement that will honestly address the deep-seated self-inflicted problems of the black underclass? If so, it will be at the behest of black leaders who fearlessly address the internecine problems of the black underclass, and this first requires the acceptance of that oft-repeated maxim of Rus-

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sell Kirk, "Culture precedes politics." So long as the present leaders of the civil rights movement are at the helm, futile political solutions and overused platitudes will continue. New leaders must emerge who recognize that a culture is transformed only when it recognizes it is in need of transformation.

Jeffrey Reed
Houston, Texas

Costs of Immigration

In "Immigration Three Step" (Public Square, March) Richard John Neuhaus' figure of 11 million for those "unlawfully present" is a contrived figure that the government has claimed. The much more thorough study by the brokerage firm Bear Stearns arrived at the figure of 18 million.

Their report destroyed the myth that many illegal aliens pay their fair share of taxes: the single largest growing sector of the economy, the authors intone, is "the gray sector," where salaries are paid and no taxes withheld. I wonder how Neuhaus, living in Manhattan, is not aware that the increasing numbers of "unlawfully present" workers have greatly added to New York's $34 billion Medicaid costs, twice the per-capita costs in the rest of the country.

I also wonder if the tablemate that Neuhaus describes is from Cochise County, Arizona, where U.S. citizens do not travel in their autos unarmed for fear of robbery or worse by those who cross the border illegally? Many of these citizens sleep with a firearm under their pillows. Where are the Homeland Security Agents when you need them?

I wonder, finally, if Neuhaus agrees with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, knowing as he and they must, that aiding and abetting illegal aliens entering the country violates federal law? Nonenforcement of immigration statutes menaces our security and violates the very fabric of a law-abiding society. This issue will not go away, and the American public will be heard, as we shall see this year and in 2008.

Vincent Chiarello
Reston, Virginia

Design, Science, and Philosophy: An Exchange

In his otherwise interesting essay ("Darwin in Dover, PA," April), Robert T. Miller echoes an unfortunate canard—that Intelligent Design supporters are duplicitous: "Most Intelligent Design theorists claim to be agnostic about the nature of this intelligent designer, but many will admit privately that the intelligent designer is God." Almost all the Intelligent Design supporters I know publicly affirm that they think the designer is God—but also point out, correctly, that evidence from biology only gets one to a designer of some sort.

Miller goes on to say that Intelligent Design is indeed science in what he calls the "Quinean" sense, but he disparages that sense as "thin." Unfortunately, Miller does not put Darwinian evolution under the same scrutiny. Many Darwinists have happily admitted that their theory makes no substantial predictions. Stephen J. Gould famously asserted that if the tape of life were replayed, a completely different set of organisms would inhabit the earth—or none at all. In fact, Miller's example of Newton's physics as the paradigm of good science is inapt. It is indeed good science, but it is not the only kind of good science. Much of what we recognize as robust science is not lawlike but descriptive or inferential, and simply asks the question: What does nature look like?

Miller worries that discussing Intelligent Design in science class would confuse students, who may be poorly prepared to appreciate its arguments. That strikes me as a bad reason to mislead students into thinking that unintelligent processes are *known* to explain the development of life on earth—which most textbooks routinely do now. If students are mature enough to be taught the advantages of Darwin's theory, they are mature enough to understand its shortcomings.

Miller further says that Intelligent Design is out of place in science class because most scientists do not accept its criticisms. But a high-school science class is not a conference of professional scientists. To be liberally educated, students should be taught to place science in a wider context than professional scientists do. Should such discussions be barred from biology class and restricted to a philosophy class, as Miller proposes? In my view that would be terrible pedagogy. It would teach students that academic boundaries are more important than answers.

The splitting of hairs about whether Intelligent Design is Quinean science, robust science, statistics, theology, philosophy, art criticism, or something else is a bore. Maybe it's one of those, or a mixture of several, or something completely different. So what? The interesting question is whether Intelligent

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Design is actually true. About these questions, perhaps Miller is content to "take the results of science as given," by which he apparently means accepting the assurances issued by scientific societies. But other people might want to think for themselves.

Michael J. Behe
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Robert T. Miller hit the nail on the head when he wrote, "Intelligent Design is not science, at least in the usual sense, but neither is it religion. . . . The truth is that Intelligent Design is metaphysics, a branch of philosophy. . . . I think public high schools ought to offer, at the senior level, a course in philosophy, including metaphysics."

I told one of the defense lawyers in the Dover case that he should take a key witness for the plaintiffs and make him a witness for the defense: Get him to admit that Intelligent Design is not science in the self-restrictive sense in which modern science understands itself, then focus on trying to explain the distinction between religion ("revealed doctrine surpassing human wisdom and accepted as a matter of faith," in Miller's succinct formulation) and philosophy.

Of course, this is difficult, precisely because of the contemporary blindness in regard to metaphysics. I think this problem is also fundamental to the debates on cloning, Altered Nuclear Transplants, and Oocyte-Assisted Reprogramming. If we accept modern scientific reductionism's claim that things can be defined by their constituent elements, the debate is lost.

In the same issue, in the "Correspondence" section, however, a letter by Miller is answered by Cardinal Schönborn—and Schönborn is correct in his responses to Miller's criticisms. There is indeed a need for more clarity regarding what counts for science in today's academic community, what formal and final causes are and where they are legitimately employed in intellectual inquiry, and what the nature of metaphysics is and its relation to natural philosophy or philosophical cosmology. On all these points I think Cardinal Schönborn has shown a better grasp of what is central and essential. I hope that these exchanges will lead to a meeting of minds in the pages of First Things, which I commend for giving this issue the attention it deserves.

Joseph Fessio, S.J.
Ave Maria University
Naples, Florida

Robert T. Miller is wrong when he claims that "Judge Jones had to determine whether Intelligent Design is religion or science." The court in *Kitzmiller* applied two related establishment-clause tests to the Dover board's policies.

The first, which it called the "endorsement" test, asks, "Would a reasonable, informed observer, i.e., one familiar with the history and context . . . perceive the challenged government action as endorsing religion?" Under the endorsement test, the "reasonable observer" is a reasonably informed person within the community, not a member of a specialized guild—such as professional scientists. The "endorsement" test seeks to determine the "*effect* of the display on the reasonable observer, inquiring whether the reasonable observer would perceive it as an endorsement of religion."

The second test Jones applied was the *Lemon* test. The *Lemon* test asks "(1) whether the government practice had a secular purpose; (2) whether its principal or primary effect advanced or inhibited religion; and (3) whether it created an excessive entanglement of the government with religion." The principal inquiry under *Lemon*, aside from the questions asked under the endorsement test, is about legislative intent.

It is odd that a trial court would apply both the endorsement test and the *Lemon* test. The endorsement test usually is viewed as a way of collapsing the three-part *Lemon* inquiry into a single question of public perception. Nevertheless, the key issues before Judge Jones were questions of public perception and legislative intent: Did the relevant public *perceive* that the Dover school board was favoring a particular religion, and did the Dover school board *intend* to favor a religion? These are narrow questions about the perceptions and motives of a small group of people, not broad philosophical questions about the meaning of "science."

After determining what law applies, Jones reviewed the facts concerning the adoption of Dover's Intelligent Design policy and found that the policy was essentially a repackaging of an earlier, failed "creation science" policy—and that a reasonable observer would understand that the policy constituted an endorsement of the religious viewpoints of some members of the school board.

The judge supported these findings with numerous citations of statements made by school-board members. He made these findings before discussing whether Intelligent Design is "science."

Only after making these findings concerning of the perception of the school board's policy in the local community did Jones move on to the issue of whether Intelligent Design is "science." Although the judge mentioned that his findings regarding whether Intelligent Design is "science" were "essential" to his holding under the establishment clause, he never explained why. He made no serious effort to relate his findings concerning Intelligent Design and "science" to the endorsement test's "reasonable

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observer" standard, nor could he have done so.

David W. Opderbeck
Assistant Professor of Law
Baruch College
City University of New York

Even if we grant Robert T. Miller's premise that Intelligent Design is philosophy and not real science, it does not necessarily follow that Intelligent Design should be kept out of science classes.

Science teachers, at least good ones, discuss the philosophy of science with their students every day. Anyone sitting in on a high-school science class might hear mention, overt or tacit, of many universes, string theory, other dimensions, the scientific method, the law of parsimony, and so on. None of these raise an eyebrow when discussed in public-school classrooms, yet every one of them is a matter of metaphysical preference, not empirical fact. Why, then, should we suddenly grow squeamish when the philosophical topic turns to the possibility of an extra-cosmic designer?

Richard L. Cleary
Dallastown, Pennsylvania

I disagree with Robert T. Miller about the legal issues in the Dover case. Judge Jones issued a court order prohibiting criticism of Darwinism from the perspective of Intelligent Design in biology classes in Dover public schools. Violation of a federal court order is a federal crime. Now, what should the teacher do if a student asks a question about Intelligent Design?

Is it a federal crime to answer it? Has the student committed a crime by asking it? If it is not a crime for students to ask about Intelligent Design in class, is it a crime for the teacher to respond to students' questions using the reasoning expressed in the censored statement? Or must the teacher answer the students' questions only in accord with Jones' philosophy of science as expressed in his written opinion? If some answers are legal under Jones' order, and others illegal, should teachers submit possible answers to the judge for prior approval? Is *criticism* of Intelligent Design theory in science class illegal because it necessarily involves discussion of Intelligent Design? Jones' ruling is a Constitutional outrage and an incoherent mess.

Michael Egnor
Professor of Neurosurgery
State University of New York
Stony Brook, New York

Robert T. Miller's essay is a classic example of the fallacies of tidy-minded thinking. Miller claims that only lawlike principles belong to science, while "Quinean" reasoning like that used in Intelligent Design theory belongs exclusively to metaphysics. But scientific papers are filled with both kinds of reasoning. Metaphysics itself uses several categories of thought. Miller's artificial rules about what categories of thought can be used in particular fields are never followed by anyone in the real world.

Miller's discussion of "lawlike" principles of science involves an epistemological error: Assume that laws of nature exist; assume a scientist devises a model by which he can predict natural events; assume that reliable prediction is possible because nature consistently follows law. Now, can we conclude that the scientist has discovered and understands a law of nature? Miller says yes, but the answer is no. The model is an imitator of nature for one particular application and nothing more. The mind of man understands the model because the model was created by man. The mind of man does *not* understand nature at its deepest level, because nature was created by God.

Kant says that the human intellect converts the phenomena of nature into concepts using *a priori* categories of the mind. Thus, we have a practical knowledge that is translated to the human mind and amenable to human use. However, the underlying essence of what we observe is concealed from human knowledge: There is always a gap between a scientific model and the actual laws of nature.

The false presumption that scientists understand the laws of nature has led to two kinds of epistemological imperialism by the scientific establishment: First, the idea that what we know is the only knowledge that is reliable and worth knowing (Miller does not make this mistake), and second, the notion that we can shelter ourselves from those who use different processes of reasoning by declaring their methods unscientific. Miller *does* make that mistake, and it is a difficult mistake to forgive.

Fred Hutchison
Dublin, Ohio

Robert T. Miller suggests that philosophical questions such as those raised by Intelligent Design should be separated from evolutionary science into a realm of metaphysics where science provides the "given" results whence philosophy proceeds.

The implication is that science provides neutral facts devoid of philosophical implications. A further implication is that, through separation, the two realms will retain approximate equality in the public square. The ideals of neutrality and equality, however, often create a social and intellectual climate that is neither neutral nor equal.

When "scientific" and "philosophical" questions are separated, they are unlikely to receive equal treatment in schools. Rarely, if ever, would one encounter a science teacher able to tell his students that the *philosophical* implications of evolution will be considered next period

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in a metaphysics class. The vast number of science classes in high schools and colleges overwhelms the very few courses that treat metaphysical issues, letting philosophical questions fade from consciousness and public consideration.

It is unlikely that philosophical questions pertaining to evolution will ever be given a fair hearing as long as they are quarantined by a milieu defined by the explicit dominance of the scientific method and an implicit dominance of metaphysical naturalism. Separate is not equal. The alternative to such separations could be defined, not on the basis of method, but on the basis of the subject and all that is relevant to it—including philosophical considerations.

Jack D. Elliott Jr.
West Point, Mississippi

Robert T. Miller's article was helpful in many ways, but his conclusions merit the same "sustain in part, reverse in part" he gave Judge Jones in *Kitzmiller*. Miller is correct in noting that Intelligent Design is not "science" as science is understood and practiced by scientists today. Science has increasingly come to mean the development and promulgation of theories that explain nature in terms of laws that purport to describe and govern all observable phenomena of nature. The success of this scientific endeavor has been a major strand in the post-Enlightenment project of showing that, when it comes to God, we "have no need of that hypothesis."

But neo-Darwinism has extended the realm of the physical sciences into the biological sciences by showing how random physical events at the molecular level could combine with natural selection to explain the biological creation and evolution of plants and animals, including human beings. In the scientists' framework of creation, life is no longer special, and this has greatly reduced the spaces in which a "God of the gaps" could work. "Dialectical Darwinists" like Dawkins and Dennett press this conceptual advantage to the limit, arguing that there is no need and no room for God in explaining life. By pressing the point, with tacit support from the scientific community and the current jurisprudence of the establishment clause, neo-Darwinism without God has become what our children are taught in school, and it is hardly surprising that people who believe that there is a God would search for a way to let their children know there is a vital difference between scientific neo-Darwinian theories and the near-religious assertions of dialectical Darwinists.

It is unfortunate that Intelligent Design became a test case. Intelligent Design challenges neo-Darwinism by injecting the notion that there are things in the natural world so complex that that they cannot be explained by any process operating according to the laws of science. But the complexity of flagella and eyes, for example, are poor instruments for refuting neo-Darwinism, much less dialectical Darwinism. Since no one really knows how specific instances of evolution occurred in the past, Darwinists feel free to hypothesize about multistage "exadaptations." It is hard to imagine the proponents of Intelligent Design coming up with a scenario that would be half as entertaining as the scientific community's invention of exadaptations that supposedly show how complex structures could have evolved.

The issue in Dover is not flagella, or complexity in general, but a deep division between those who believe in a secular universe and those who believe in a Creator God. Each camp wants schools to teach their children from its point of view. As matters now stand, the secular camp has the advantage in the courts, the press, and the schools. Intelligent Design is not up to the challenge of providing a serious alternative.

Charlie Mae
McLean, Virginia

Robert T. Miller replies:

I thank all of the correspondents for raising important issues and allowing me to explain my views in greater detail.

To begin with Michael Behe, I assure him that I attribute no duplicity to the proponents of Intelligent Design. In the passage he refers to, I meant only, as Behe says, that Intelligent Design theorists claim to possess an argument for the existence of an intelligent designer of life on Earth, not necessarily an argument for the existence of a Supreme Being. I reiterate that, in my view, Intelligent Design is a perfectly respectable philosophical position, has nontrivial arguments in its favor, and may well turn out to be true.

On more substantive issues, Behe rightly notes that Neo-Darwinism makes at best only very weak predictions. Thinking that my distinction between science in the Quinean sense and science in the strict sense turns on predictive power, Behe then concludes I am letting Neo-Darwinism off easy by not holding it to the standard to which I held Intelligent Design.

Here Behe misunderstands my position. I distinguish science in the strict sense from science in the mere Quinean sense on the basis of the lawlikeness of the universal statements in which science taken strictly is couched, not on the basis of predictive power. Predictiveness generally follows from lawlikeness, but it is the lawlikeness, not the predictiveness, on which the distinction is based. In this regard, Neo-Darwinism and Intelligent Design differ significantly because, although everything posited by Neo-Darwinism acts in accordance with nat-

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ural laws, the intelligent designer does not. That's quite enough, in my mind, to make Neo-Darwinism a strictly scientific theory and Intelligent Design something else.

As to predictiveness, strictly scientific theories generally entail particular kinds of falsifiable predictions—predictions of the form "If such-and-such physical conditions obtain, then such-and-such phenomena will be observed," what Quine would call observation categoricals. Such predictions allow us to test scientific theories by contriving the appropriate physical conditions and observing whether the predicted phenomena occur. Such tests let us be more certain about scientific theories than about other kinds of theories not subject to such tests. Of course, in some cases contriving the physical conditions mentioned in a scientific prediction is impracticable; some useful experiments in physics, for example, cannot be performed in practice because they would require particle accelerators the size of a galaxy. In such cases, the epistemic advantages of science's predictiveness are lost, and this may have various practical implications, but the epistemological distinction between scientific and nonscientific theories remains.

As I assume Behe would admit, Neo-Darwinism does make scientific predictions, albeit mostly ones falsifiable only in principle and not in practice. For example, if we could collect a few million planets substantially similar to what Earth was like about two billion years ago and let them be for a few hundred million years, we could then examine them to determine if any organisms with irreducibly complex biological structures had appeared through random mutation and natural selection. If not, then Neo-Darwinism would be falsified, at least to a high degree of probability.

There is nothing comparable in the case of Intelligent Design. Intelligent Design does not, even in principle, entail that if such-and-such conditions are fulfilled, the intelligent designer will cause some irreducibly complex biological structures to appear. Such a designer is under no obligation to act, no matter what conditions may obtain.

Further, it may even be possible to test Neo-Darwinism in practice. Imagine that experimental results show that, under certain circumstances, some strain of bacteria evolves over thousands of generations some new feature of the kind that Intelligent Design theorists would recognize as irreducibly complex. This would suggest very strongly that Neo-Darwinism was true. Once again, there is no comparable experimental result for Intelligent Design.

As to whether Intelligent Design ought be taught in high-school science classes, I still say that a scientific theory supported by only a small minority of the scientific community ought not be taught in high schools. Rather, we teach in high schools only what the scientific community generally regards as sound science. To learn a discipline, the beginning student has to start with what, at least for the time being, seems clear to those who are already proficient. Until a person knows a good deal of science, he is just not a competent judge of scientific disputes. Behe has much less confidence in the scientific evidence for Neo-Darwinism than do most scientists working in the area, and so he wants to teach in high schools what he takes to be a competing scientific theory better justified by the evidence. I think he's overeager.

Behe also thinks that all this discussion of the epistemological status of Intelligent Design is pointless hair-splitting, the only real question being how complex life forms actually originated. Here, I must respectfully disagree. Questions about the kinds of justifications that underlie various theories, about what we ought to teach in public schools, and about possible usurpations of public resources to teach religious doctrine are also real questions that need to be answered. I am sorry that getting clear about such things bores Behe. We all get impatient with specialized discussions outside our own areas of expertise, for we tend not to appreciate the significance of the technical distinctions that specialists make and the subtleties of argument that are important to them. That's one of the reasons that, not being a scientist, I am prepared to defer to the conclusions of the scientific community about which scientific theories are best justified by the available evidence, including its current consensus in favor of Neo-Darwinism.

FATHER JOSEPH FESSIO and I agree more than we disagree. He thinks that his friend Cardinal Schönborn got the better of me in our exchange of letters in the April issue, but I am happy to let the arguments in those letters speak for themselves.

DAVID W. OPDERBECK underestimates, I think, how unusual *Kitzmiller* was. In most establishment-clause cases, the issue has not been whether a doctrine or practice is religious but whether the government's involvement with a religious doctrine or practice has been too great. For example, in *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, a public school had a policy regarding student-led prayers at high-school football games, and a key issue was whether the prayer, religious by any standard, was properly attributable to the government or only to the students. In resolving such issues, the courts have asked whether reasonably informed members of the community would conclude that government, as opposed to some private party, is endorsing the religious doctrine or practice.

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In *Kitzmiller*, however, even after it was settled that the school board was endorsing Intelligent Design, the issue remained whether what was being endorsed amounted to religion. The *Kitzmiller* court thus really did need to determine whether Intelligent Design is religious, scientific, or something else.

Opderbeck would have decided the case under the legislative-intent component of the *Lemon* test, arguing that the religious motivation of the Dover school board was sufficient for a violation of the establishment clause.

Lemon surely says that a religious legislative intent is enough for a violation, but, like Justice Scalia and others, I do not agree. For example, the members of some school board might think it is their religious duty to teach arithmetic, and they might make it clear that they are mandating the teaching of arithmetic for the greater glory of God, perhaps on the basis of some numerological religious principles. They would thus have a religious motivation for their arithmetic policy, but teaching arithmetic does not thereby become unconstitutional.

To decide *Kitzmiller*, I would note as a preliminary matter that some scientific theories are more compatible with certain religious doctrines than are others. For instance, the big-bang theory meshes nicely with the doctrine of divine creation by a transcendent God, but the theory that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in time, which was the dominant theory among physicists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, seems more compatible with atheism. Similarly, the monogenetic theory of the origin of humankind is more compatible with the Christian doctrines of the creation and fall of man than is the polygenetic theory. There can thus be religious reasons for preferring one purely scientific theory over another.

In *Kitzmiller*, a public-school board adopted a policy of disparaging a scientific theory generally supported by the scientific community in order to promote as science what is really a philosophical theory—and all this because the philosophical theory supports theism while the generally accepted scientific theory seems to some people to support atheism. Here we have a subjective religious purpose combined with an indirect religious effect, all achieved through the illegitimate means of teaching as science a theory not generally accepted by the scientific community. For me, that is enough to violate the establishment clause. More generally, I would lay down the rule that the government violates the establishment clause if it endorses a putatively scientific theory that is not accepted by the scientific community and does so for the subjective purpose of promoting a religious doctrine perceived to be supported by the theory being endorsed. This rule would allow religiously motivated teaching of theories generally accepted in the scientific community, as well as the teaching of theories not so accepted if the decision to teach them were made on nonreligious grounds. The rule does, however, prevent religious groups from inserting into public education doctrines not generally accepted in the scientific community in order to advance religion.

Since the establishment clause should be neutral as between religion and nonreligion, there would be an analogous rule about putatively scientific theories not accepted by the scientific community but endorsed by government for the subjective purpose of inhibiting religious doctrines. For example, if a group of militant atheists gain control of a school board and mandate that physics teachers discuss, in addition to the big-bang theory, the theory that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in time—a theory not accepted in the scientific community but favored by the school board over the big bang because of the big bang's perceived theistic implications—this too would violate the establishment clause.

Richard L. Cleary runs together several things that ought be kept separate. Multiverses, strings, and multiple dimensions are unobservable entities posited to explain observed phenomena; such entities are no less scientific posits than subatomic particles or gravitational fields, which are equally unobservable. Discussions of the scientific method or standards of scientific reasoning, while not scientific posits, are properly part of science education, which not only conveys scientific knowledge but teaches the methods and principles by which such knowledge is gained.

The philosophy of science, by contrast, is a subdivision of philosophy that treats philosophical questions arising from science, like whether scientific laws are mere regularities or metaphysically necessary truths. All of these are different from Intelligent Design, which is a philosophical theory in direct competition with a scientific theory. As I have already said, as a matter of policy, we ought not to teach philosophical theories in science classes; as a matter of constitutional law, if for a religious purpose we teach nonscientific theories in public schools, or even scientific theories not accepted in the scientific community, we also violate the establishment clause.

Michael Egnor raises a host of questions, apparently in the mistaken belief that they do not have clear answers. In fact, they do. The order issued in *Kitzmiller* applied only to the school board and enjoined only the particular policy at issue in the case. Thus, students do not violate the order by asking about Intelligent

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Design, if only because they are not subject to the order. Even if individual teachers, as opposed to the school board, are deemed to be subject to the order, answering a student's question does not amount to enforcing the enjoined policy, and so the teacher would not violate the order either, no matter how he answered the student's question. Furthermore, most high-school biology teachers have become adept at artfully deflecting questions about creationism; doing so about Intelligent Design ought be no harder. The messiness Egnor perceives is a mirage.

FRED HUTCHINSON is right that, in terms of getting along in the real world, we have to make use simultaneously of various kinds of theories, scientific and otherwise. I remind him that I consistently said I was speaking about the differences among various theories *from an epistemological point of view*, and what is important in epistemology might not be important in other contexts.

Hutchinson and I have a more substantial dispute about whether science amounts to genuine knowledge about the natural world. Hutchinson denies that it does. For my part, I think that the knowledge we have of the external world, both the natural sciences and our commonsense physics, is the most reliable form of knowledge we have. It is certainly more reliable than Kant's conclusions in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In any event, we all risk our lives on such knowledge every day, trusting that the automobiles, skyscrapers, and jetliners built in reliance on such knowledge will function as predicted and not kill us.

Hutchinson also thinks I am trying to rule theories like Intelligent Design out of bounds by declaring them unscientific, but I am doing no such thing. I merely argued that Intelligent Design is epistemologically different from science in the strict sense and that this militates against teaching it in science classes in public schools. I went out of my way to say that theories scientific in the Quinean sense, including Intelligent Design, may very well be fully justified by the available evidence and be true in every sense of the word, and I expressly suggested a place for philosophy, which includes such theories, in the public-school curriculum. Hutchinson finds it difficult to forgive me for the views he wrongly attributes to me, but I'm happy to forgive him for the misreading.

I SYMPATHIZE WITH Jack D. Elliott's concern that philosophy gets short shrift relative to science in our education system and would likely continue to do so even if, as I proposed, we taught philosophy courses in high school. To some extent, this disparity of treatment is inevitable, for philosophy, being the most abstract of the humanities, is necessarily the most difficult, can be taught only to more mature and well-prepared students, and often presupposes results in science or other domains. Elliott's solution of combining philosophy and science in one course, however, seems to me impracticable. Even if the epistemological and pedagogical objections can be overcome, Elliott's proposal would work a revolution in educational organization. Some high schools already teach courses in philosophy. My proposal to do this more widely is at least within the realm of what might be practically achieved.

CHARLIE MAE SAYS he agrees in part and disagrees in part with what I said in the original article, but the area of agreement seems much larger than the area of disagreement. In fact, I cannot discern just which position I took that Mae rejects. But if Mae really wants a disagreement, I will accommodate him by disagreeing with his view that Neo-Darwinism as taught in public schools generally incorporates the atheistic prejudices of Dawkins and Dennett. There are some aggressively atheistic science teachers in our schools and even an occasionally biased sentence in high-school science texts, and both of these need to be dealt with, but teaching Neo-Darwinism remains so controversial because some religious believers think that the scientific theory itself is a threat to religious doctrine—which it is, if one's religious doctrines include some very literal readings of Genesis. For this there is no remedy. What I take to be the correct view appears in a passage from the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1913 pointed out to me by Stephen Barr: "The gist of the theory of evolution as a scientific hypothesis . . . is in perfect agreement with the Christian conception of the universe; for Scripture does not tell us in what form the present species of plants and of animals were originally created by God."

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Opinion

Misplacing Children

Gregory K. Popcak

Attempting social engineering at gunpoint, the State of Massachusetts recently ordered the Catholic Church to place adoptive children with gay and lesbian couples. In response, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to discontinue its entire adoption program or risk prosecution for its "discriminatory" practices. Although Massachusetts' governor Mitt Romney advocates a bill that would grant religious exemption, the bill is controversial and its passage unlikely. In the wake of these events, other dioceses across the country, such as the archdiocese of San Francisco, have discontinued their practice of placing children with gay and lesbian couples, while still other dioceses, such as the Archdiocese of Denver, have reasserted their longstanding policy against the practice.

With a few exceptions, the response from the mainstream media has been the claim that, once again, the Church is allowing strict adherence to its antiquated ideals to interfere with the welfare of flesh-and-blood human beings—and this time, children are obliged to suffer for the Church's folly.

The argument packs a strong emotional punch. On a visceral level, even those who argue that the real issue is religious liberty and not discrimination could understandably feel a profound sadness that an orphaned child's dreams of a home may be delayed or denied for any reason. The best orphanage is still a terrible place for children, and foster care is no replacement for a stable home. Considering the alternatives, there is a strong temptation to seek out any home that will accept the child.

And yet, in *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict asserts that there is a difference between social work and social justice. Mother Teresa observed this when she argued that her Missionaries of Charity "weren't social workers." Social work is about meeting a need, while social justice has to be about meeting the need in a way that chiefly highlights the godly dignity of both the person being served and the person doing the serving. Even if *you* aren't particular about how your need is met, I undermine the dignity of *my own* personhood if I serve you in a way that I believe is contrary to your dignity as a child of God. As Pope Benedict wrote, "Those who work for the Church's charitable organizations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity. Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a "formation of the heart": They need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others.

It is tempting to ask what it would hurt. Why shouldn't we let a well-meaning homosexual couple take in a child? But this is the wrong question. The real question is "How can the Church serve *at all* if the Church is compelled by the state to serve in a manner that detracts from its primary mission—to point to eternal truths, to be a means of sanctification, and to stand as a witness to the Christian anthropological foundations of the human person?" If the state will not allow the Church to be Church, then, whatever else it does, the Church cannot allow itself to become a social service agency that stinks of incense and good intentions.

There is a second objection voiced by those who oppose the Church's stance on placing children with heterosexual couples exclusively. This objection is based on the erroneous belief that the Church's stance is rooted in a fear that children raised by homosexuals will be "turned gay." While the etiology of homosexual attraction continues to be hotly debated, the Church has never said that this is the concern. The 2003 document *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons*, for example, states, "As experience has shown, the absence of sexual complementarity in [homosexual] unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood."

Moreover, it is disingenuous to attempt to undermine Church teaching on the natural family by arguing that there is no evidence that children raised by homosexual parents are damaged by the experience: There is no evidence of harm because there is no evidence at all. In their recent book *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path to Harm*, Nicholas Cummings and Rogers Wright argue that, especially in the area of sexuality, psychologists have abandoned all pretense of scientific inquiry and allowed themselves to become high priests of a religion of political correctness.

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It is well known, for instance, that the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder by fiat in late 1973. What is less known is that the same resolution insisted on further scientific research and rigorous study of the matter. What is even *less* known is that, according to Wright and Cummings, no further significant research has been conducted on the matter, much less published in a mainstream, professional, peer-reviewed journal. While other authors have made similar criticisms of the mental-health professions, Wright and Cummings' assertions are especially stinging because, in addition to having no cultural agenda to push, they are the two men most responsible for establishing psychology as a medical profession on par with psychiatry and convincing insurers to offer third-party payment for psychotherapy.

Still, wouldn't it be better for the children to give them at least *some* kind of home? In the event, this question requires that there are significantly more children waiting to be adopted than there are heterosexual couples waiting to adopt. And this is simply not the case. According to statistics provided by both the National Survey of Family Growth and the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, there are approximately 120,000 children in the United States waiting to be adopted each year. About half of these are adopted by family members, leaving about 60,000 children who are waiting to be adopted by nonrelated adoptive parents. By contrast, each year there are anywhere between 70,000 and 162,000 married couples in the United States who have either filed for adoption or are in process of filing. That means that in any given year there are between 1.2 and 2.7 married couples per waiting child. In other words, there is no child-centered need to open up adoption to homosexual couples.

More, in the unlikely event that there was a state in which there were not enough married, heterosexual couples waiting to adopt, before a Church agency could approve a homosexual adoption it would have to be shown that there were no other regional agencies capable of placing the child. Again, this is not the case. As with most cities, Boston has many adoption agencies, and many of them are more than happy to place children with homosexual couples. There is absolutely no need—unless one allows for the obsessive need of the gay-rights movement for cultural validation—to insist that Church agencies change their placement practices.

Even if there were not enough adoptive, married heterosexual couples *and* there were not a plethora of other agencies offering adoption services, the Church would need to have extraordinarily serious reasons for even considering placing a child with a homosexual couple, especially in the present atmosphere. The absence of a religious-exemption clause in the Massachusetts legislation clearly shows that the sole purpose of this recent initiative was to find some way, any way, to force the Church to accept the legitimacy of gay marriage. If you add to the mix the fact that the diocese in Massachusetts—weakened by its practically criminal response to the sex-abuse scandals—still continues to oppose gay marriage, then you see that the Church of Boston presented a tempting target.

In this politically electrified environment, for the Church to make an individual exception would be tantamount to capitulation to those committed to destroying the natural family. Under less hostile circumstances it might be possible to advance some kind of reasonable casuistry on a very limited basis, perhaps even along the lines as was being practiced before the state attempted to strong-arm the Church. But things being the way they are, it is difficult to imagine how anyone could think that such a pastoral practice would be anything other than material cooperation in the war against the natural family and Christian anthropology.

Despite an understandable tug on the heartstrings, there is simply no substance to any argument against the Church's courageous and ultimately compassionate insistence that all children, especially adoptive children, deserve a mother *and* a father.

Gregory K. Popcak is executive director of the Pastoral Solutions Institute, author of seven books on Catholic thought and psychotherapy, and the host of the nationally syndicated radio program Heart Mind and Strength.

Jews and the World to Come

Byron L. Sherwin

In 2004, on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*, correspondent Nina Totenberg declared, "Jews do not believe in an afterlife"—to which talk-show host Michael Medved shot back that the claim is "a slander to all believing Jews everywhere."

So, which view is correct? Both, as it happens. Survey data from opinion polls consistently indicates that most American Jews do not believe in an afterlife. Yet, a survey of the sacred and significant texts of Judaism reveals that every important Jewish religious thinker,

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from Talmudic times to our own, has depicted belief in an afterlife as a fundamental feature of Jewish faith. Judaism affirms belief in an afterlife; most American Jews do not.

An analysis of survey data shows that about 80 percent of American Christians believe in an afterlife. About 65 percent of Americans who affirm no specific religious faith (including atheists and agnostics) nonetheless say they believe in an afterlife. Of all the groups surveyed, American Jews have consistently shown the lowest belief in an afterlife: 46 percent in polls done in the late 1990s. Still, of all groups surveyed, belief in an afterlife has increased the most among American Jews: from 19 percent in the 1970s to 46 percent in the 1990s, an increase of 142 percent. As Jewish American baby boomers continue to age, a further increase is likely.

Human beings have always asked what is next. Is this life all that there is? What can I expect when my life ends? Is death the end, the annihilation of all that I am? Or, as Tolstoy poignantly put it: Is there any meaning in my life that will not be destroyed by the inevitable death that awaits me? Historically and theologically, Judaism has affirmed that, though death is inevitable, something of ourselves can survive our physical death, that some form of individual self-perpetuation is available beyond the grave.

Unlike other religions and philosophies, Judaism never has avoided the inevitability or the reality of death. Already in Genesis, the first human being is told: "Dust you are and to dust you will return." Ecclesiastes states that "a season is set for everything: a time to be born and a time to die."

In contrast, much of Western civilization has sought to deny the reality of human mortality. The early-twentieth-century Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig characterized the history of philosophy as an attempt to "distract us from its [death's] perennial dominion," "to rob death of its poisonous sting." We readily use euphemisms to disguise death. The deceased is not referred to as one who has died but as one who has "passed." The grave is called a "resting place" for one who is "asleep" or "on a journey." The corpse is taken to a "parlor," a funeral parlor, where cosmetic techniques make it look "lifelike." Yet, as we age, moving closer to the end of life than to its beginning, the reality of our own mortality inevitably begins to haunt us. Like our forebears, we feel increasingly compelled to ask: What's next?

Children preparing for Bar and Bat Mitzvah are taught the traditional blessing to be recited after the reading of the Torah that says, "eternal life (*haye olam*) you [God] have implanted within us." It does not say that God has assured us eternal life, but that God has implanted within us, like a seed within the soul, the potential for life after death, for self-perpetuation.

The task in life, then, is to nurture and to develop this seed. Belief in the afterlife is not a way of escaping the responsibilities of life in this world, as some claim, but is rather a challenge to imbue life with a meaning that will outlast it. As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: "Survival beyond death carries, according to Judaism, demands and obligations during life here and now. Conditions are attached to the hope of survival.... Eternity is not an automatic consequence of sheer being.... It must be achieved, earned." How a person lives his or her life determines what of ourselves can be perpetuated beyond death. As William James put it, "Spend life in a way that will outlast it." The kabbalistic teaching about the *halluka*, the heavenly garment, illustrates this view.

According to this teaching, every deed we do during life weaves a stitch in a heavenly garb. The nature of the deed determines the nature of the stitch. A good deed weaves a beautiful stitch. A bad deed weaves an ugly stitch. After death, each person is cloaked for eternity in the garb woven from his or her deeds during life. The life each person has led determines the size and the appearance of the garb that he or she will wear for eternity. In this view, the spiritual and moral quality of each of our lives is perpetuated in the life after death. The imprint made by our deeds on others, society, and culture can survive us.

For the eleventh-century Jewish philosopher Bahya ibn Pakudah, the belief that there is no afterlife—no ultimate accountability for the way we have lived, no possibility for self-perpetuation beyond our years on Earth—readily leads to nihilism, hedonism, escape from moral responsibility, and obsession with trivialities. Bahya's *Duties of the Heart* and Moses Hayyim Luzzatto's eighteenth-century *Paths of the Upright* have been two of the most influential works of Jewish ethical literature. Stating the dominant, representative view of Jewish religious literature about the afterlife, Luzzatto writes, "The purpose for which human beings were created is realized not in this world but in the World to Come. Human existence in this world is but a preparation for existence in the World to Come which is the goal." For Ibn Pakudah, Luzzatto, and others, life in this world should focus on developing our spiritual, moral, and creative potentialities—to prepare for the next step, to help ensure some form of self-perpetuation in the World to Come.

But what is the nature of the World to Come, the afterlife, according to Jewish religious teachings? That

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there is an afterlife is a longstanding presupposition of Judaism. Two of Maimonides' thirteen principles of the Jewish faith relate to an afterlife. Many Jewish prayers, customs, and practices assume such a belief. The traditional Jewish liturgy contains countless references to life after death. For example, in the *Amidah* prayer recited three times each day, God is blessed for reviving the dead. Other prayers and practices, such as *yizkor* (prayers in memory of deceased relatives) and *yahrzeit* (remembrance of the deceased on the anniversary of his of her death), and many practices observed during and after funerals, articulate belief in an afterlife.

The afterlife may well be a different dimension of existence that transcends time and space. For human beings to try to grasp the nature of the afterlife would be like a person blind from birth trying to describe color. About the nature of the afterlife, we have speculation, faith, and expectation, but no experience.

In this view of the afterlife, the body dies but the soul survives. Consider the analogy of the soul and the body to an astronaut. In space, the astronaut is totally dependent on a space suit for existence in space, but it is not so of the astronaut in the totally different atmosphere of Earth. Similarly, the body may be merely a capsule designed for life in this world. In the totally different atmosphere of the next world, it might not be required. Or, to use another analogy—can the caterpillar conceive of what life is like as a butterfly? For the caterpillar, a cocoon means death, but for a butterfly it means a new life, a new beginning, a radically different type of existence. Indeed, for some, the soul resides in the body; yet, for others, the body resides within the soul.

Passing down a name, genes, and family traditions is a way of continuing and perpetuating our lives and those of our forbearers. The Ashkenazic (or European) Jewish custom of naming children for a deceased family member expresses this view. A deceased's identity is perpetuated by granting his or her name to a new person, a new life.

But children and grandchildren perpetuate more than DNA. Children can perpetuate our values, wisdom, memories, deeds, dreams, and love. They can continue some of what we have begun, though we leave an unfinished song. They can serve as a link between the past and the future. They can provide us with a biological as well as a spiritual form of self-perpetuation and continuity. A midrash compares one's children to one's deeds. Like children, our deeds are generated by us. Like children, the effects of our deeds allow part of us to survive us and provide meaning for a life well lived. As Erik Erikson said: "I am what survives me."

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body made its debut in ancient Jewish history. It became a central belief of the Talmudic and medieval rabbis. To those who doubted it, the Talmud rhetorically asks: If those who never lived can live, why can't those who once lived live again?

Initially, the doctrine of resurrection was a response to the problem of why bad things happen to good people. The earliest textual reference seems to be the well-known story in Second Maccabees of Hannah and her seven sons. After her sons are tortured to death, Hannah addresses their oppressor: "You wretch. You release us from this life but the King of the World will raise us up because we have died for God's laws, to an everlasting renewal of life."

Resurrection of the body developed in response to the Jewish passion for justice. Justice unavailable in this world is guaranteed by God in the World to Come. The rabbis taught that resurrection, like other forms of life after death, has to be earned by the performance of good deeds during life, or that resurrection serves as the redress for a life abruptly and unjustly ended by violence or disease.

In the 1885 "Pittsburgh Platform," American Reform Judaism rejected resurrection of the body as an antiquated, obsolete idea, foreign to Judaism. Though resurrection of the body is not widely embraced today, even by many who believe in an afterlife, certain principles it expresses continue to resonate. It is an affirmation of the spiritual significance of the human body, and Jewish spirituality is not only about the soul but about the body as well. According to the *Zohar*, the body is the instrument through which the soul carries out the commandments. Without the body, the soul would be a mute vagabond spirit; spiritual life would be unattainable.

The emphasis in Jewish communal life on the community and its needs can readily deflate the significance of the individual. Resurrection teaches that each individual is inestimably precious to God in his or her individuality, that without individual self-perpetuation there can be no communal continuity.

There is a curious blessing, recorded in the Talmud and recited first thing each morning as part of the daily liturgy: "My God, the soul that you have placed within me is pure. You it was who fashioned it. You it was who blew it into me. You it is who preserves it in me. And, you it will be who will take it from me, only to return it to me in time yet-to-be. . . . Praised are you, God, who restores souls to lifeless bodies." According to this prayer, resurrection occurs not only in the eschatological future but each morning when the sleeping person awakens.

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Though early American Reform Judaism rejected the idea of resurrection, it affirmed the immortality of the human soul, an idea that apparently came into Judaism under the influence of Greek philosophy in late antiquity and that gained popularity in the Middle Ages. The desire to perpetuate our essence, our soul, is an innate human trait, and such self-perpetuation is a form of life after death.

We often hear rabbis and teachers quote from the *Pirke Avot* ("The Ethics of the Fathers"). But few quote its comparison of this life to a vestibule, a waiting room, and of the World to Come to a living room. From this perspective, the quest for meaning relates to what survives us, to what we perpetuate of ourselves. The path to meaning entails focusing our attention during life not on the ephemeral, the fashionable, and the transient, but on the lasting and the enduring, on that which both transcends us and can survive us. What we do in this life effects our disposition in the World to Come.

Confrontation with the reality of our own mortality is not meant to stimulate morbidity but rather to stimulate us to fashion our lives around what we want to speak for us, and of us, when we are no longer here. How a person lives his or her life is the most important investment one will ever make on the ultimate future-options exchange. This life offers each of us an opportunity to create enduring words, to perform enduring works, and to help perpetuate institutions whose work we value. As Dostoyevsky wrote, "If you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love but every living force maintaining the life of the world would be dried up." Contemplation of life after death can lead us to perform actions aimed at making life in the here and now more meaningful, more beautiful, and more saturated with significance.

As Heschel reminds us, Judaism affirms an afterlife as a matter of faith, but exactly what it may be we cannot now know. Faith affirms life as a pilgrimage toward eternity, and draws us to the belief that God did not create the marvel of individual souls and personalities only to have them dissolve into oblivion at the time of one's death.

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His Space and Time

Each morning when he wakes he reaches for
His glasses and his watch, his space and time.
It's an old habit, from beyond the shore
That parts him from that half-forgotten clime.

But now he sees at once that he can see,
And knows that clocks don't matter any more.
But how he came by this lucidity,
This vast yet focused all-aroundness, or

The sweet free hours, the lingering at whim
In this or that café or village—why,
It's all a total mystery to him:

How these small sunlit clouds throughout the sky
And those moist fall woods as the colors dim
Are now the only scales he measures by.

Frederick Turner

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The Almost-Chosen People

Paul Johnson

When Abraham Lincoln called Americans "the almost-chosen people," he used an apt phrase, as valid now as when he coined it a hundred and forty years ago. It perfectly expresses the close but at the same time slightly uneasy relationship between the American republic and the religious spirit. That the Americans are exceptional in their attitude to religion is obvious to all, and never more so than today. But visitors from old Europe are struck by the way in which high church attendance and an often blatant religiosity coexist with the passionate pursuit of materialism. They are inclined to agree with Cotton Mather, who made the point as long ago as 1702 while documenting what he termed "Christ's great deeds in America" that "*religion* brought forth prosperity, and the *daughter* destroyed the mother. . . . There is danger lest the *enchantments* of this world make them *forget their errand into the wilderness.*"

The notion of a chosen but flawed people is directly related to America's historical origins, for the first settlers were undoubtedly animated by a sense of divine mission. The work most widely read among them, after the Bible, was Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which vigorously expressed the dynamic myth that the English were the Elect Nation. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most English people believed that their country had received Christianity directly from Christ's disciple Joseph of Arimathea, that the Emperor Constantine was British (his mother Helena being daughter of the British King Coilus), and that he had Christianized the whole civilized world, as Foxe put it, "by the help of the British army."

The myth was most tenaciously held among the Protestant sectarians, especially the colonists. The explorer and navigator John Davis stated, "There is no doubt but that we of England are this saved people, by the eternal and infallible presence of the Lord predestined to be sent unto these Gentiles in the sea, to those Isles and famous Kingdoms, there to preach the peace of the Lord." The Virginia colony was to be the greatest experiment in post-European Christianity. In a sermon to the Virginia Company in 1622, the poet John Donne, dean of St. Paul's, declared, "Act over the Acts of the Apostles; be you a Light to the Gentiles, that sit in darkness. God taught us to make ships, not to transport ourselves, but to transport Him. You shall have made this island, which is but the suburbs of the old world, a bridge, a gallery to the new; to join all to that world that shall never grow old, the kingdom of heaven." Governor Winthrop, sailing the Atlantic on the *Arabella*, wrote, "We shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

It was inevitable that such elect nation-builders should place their government in a religious frame. So, in a sense, did all Christian nations. But where, in the old world, state authority drew its divine sanction from traditional sacral kingship, in America it took the form of conscious dedication by democratic assemblies expressed in formal documents. Those sailing on the Mayflower in 1620 "for the Glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith" stated their desire "solemnly and mutually in the presence of God" to "covenant and combine ourselves together in a civill body politic."

No one who studies the key constitutional documents in American history can doubt for a moment the central and organic part played by religion in the origins and development of American republican government. The 1639 "Fundamental Orders of Connecticut"—the first written constitution in the modern sense of the term drawn up by popular convention and the first to embody the democratic idea—states in its prolegomena that the state owes its origin to "the wise disposition of the divine

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providence" and that "the word of God" requires "an orderly and decent Government established according to God" to "maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel." Where specific provision was not laid down, magistrates were to administer justice according to the rule of the word of God," and both governor and magistrates swore to act "according to the rule of God's word."

The same principle, that the Bible was to supply any defect or omission in the written law, was articulated in the first New England law code, the Massachusetts Body of Liberties of 1641, which was based on "humanity, civility, and Christianity." It did not seem possible to these founders to distinguish between government on the one hand and religion (by which they generally meant Protestant Christianity) on the other. As William Penn put it in his Preface to the Frame of Government of Pennsylvania (1682), "Government seems to me a part of religion itself, a thing sacred in its institution and end . . . an emanation of the same divine power that is both author and object of pure religion."

The danger was that such quasi-religious societies would become total societies on the medieval Christian model, tolerating no dissent from established creeds. But they did not do so. Even the churches were run by laypeople, not by the clergy. So they stressed morals and behavior rather than theology and doctrine.

Since religious establishments were popular rather than hieratic, a distinctive American religious tradition began to emerge. There was never any sense of division in law between laity and clergy, between those with spiritual privileges and those without—no jealous confrontation between a secular and an ecclesiastical world. America was born Protestant and did not have to become so through revolt and struggle. It was not built on the remains of a Catholic Church or an establishment; it had no clericalism or anticlericalism. In all these respects it differed profoundly from the old world, which had been shaped by Augustinian principles and violent reaction to them. The word *secular* never had the same significance in America as in Europe because the word *clerical* had never conveyed an image of intolerance and privilege. America had a traditionless tradition, making a fresh start with a set of Protestant assumptions, taken for granted, self-evident, as the basis for a common national creed.

In any case, in a frontier society it was impossible to preserve sectarian discipline and uniformity: dissenters simply moved on. Roger Williams broke away from strict New England Calvinism to found Providence, Rhode Island, which he called "a shelter for persons distressed for conscience." His 1644 constitution defined "the form of government established in Providence Plantations as democratical, that is to say a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all, or the greater part, of the free inhabitants."

This was the first commonwealth in modern history to make religious freedom, as opposed to an element of toleration, the principle of its existence and a reason for separating church and state. As its 1663 charter puts it, "No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, and who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all . . . may from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernments."

It is important to grasp that American society embraced the principles of voluntarism and tolerance in faith in a spirit not of secularism but of piety. Almost unconsciously the consensus grew that voluntary adherence to one faith, and tolerance of all others, was the foundation of true religion. In this respect English and American society bifurcated as early as the 1650s. While England was debating whether to have a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist settlement, and then in practice getting an Anglican one, the former governor of Massachusetts, Sir Henry Vane, was expounding the principles of civil and religious liberty, arguing that they were inseparable and that freedom of religious belief was essential to the maintenance of a Christian society: "By virtue then of this supreme law, sealed and confirmed in the blood of Christ unto all men . . . all magistrates are to fear and forebear intermeddling with giving rule or imposing in those matters." This document, and the sentiments it articulated, were more instrumental in determining the spirit of the American Constitution in religious matters than were the writings of the Enlightenment.

It is probably true that the American Revolution was in essence the political and military expression of a religious movement. Certainly those who inspired it and carried it through believed they were doing God's will. Its emotional dynamic was the Great Awakening, which began in the 1730s. The man who first preached it, Jonathan Edwards, believed strongly that there was no real difference between a political and a religious emotion, both of which were God-directed. The right kind of politics were, to his way of thinking, no more than realized eschatology. He said he saw no reason why God should not "establish a constitution" whereby human creatures should cooperate with him and all might know that the hour was coming when God "shall take the kingdom"; he looked for "the dawn of that glorious day."

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Edwards saw religion as the essential unifying force in American society, and that force was personified in his evangelical successor George Whitefield. Until this time America was a series of very different states with little contact with each other, often with stronger links to Europe than to their neighbors. Religious evangelism was the first continental phenomenon, transcending differences between the colonies, dissolving state boundaries, and introducing truly national figures. Whitefield was the first American celebrity, as well known in New Hampshire as in Georgia. His form of religious ecumenicalism preceded and shaped political unity. It popularized the real ethic of the American Revolution, which was not so much political as social and religious—the beliefs and standards and attitudes that the great majority of the American people had in common. It was a Christian and to a great extent a Protestant ethic, infinitely more important than the purely dogmatic variations of the sects.

It is worth remembering that the key state in the formation of the union—Pennsylvania—was the most diverse in religion. It was a Presbyterian stronghold, the headquarters of the Baptists, a state in which Anglicanism was strong and Catholicism flourished, home to a variety of Mennonites, Moravians, and German pietists, as well as the founding Quakers. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were thus framed in an appropriate setting (it was also the center of America's economic communications). The institution of religious freedom and of a state that did not distinguish between faiths was the work not so much of millenarian sects revolting against magisterial churchmen as of the denominational leaders and statesmen themselves, who saw that pluralism was the only form consonant with the ideals and necessities of the country.

Even those most strongly influenced by the secular spirit of the Enlightenment acknowledged the centrality of the religious spirit in giving birth to America. As John Adams put it in 1818, "The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. [It] was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations." He saw religion, indeed, as the foundation of the American civic spirit: "One great advantage of the Christian religion is that it brings the great principle of the law of nature and nations, love your neighbour as yourself, and do to others as you would that others do to you, to the knowledge, belief and veneration of the whole people. Children, servants, women and men are all professors in the science of public as well as private morality. . . . The duties and rights of the man and the citizen are thus taught from early infancy."

The United States of America was not, therefore, a secular state; it might more accurately be described as a moral and ethical society without a state religion. Clearly, those who created it saw it as an entity, to use Lincoln's later phrase, "under God." The Declaration of Independence in its first paragraph invokes "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" as the entitlement of the American people to choose separation, and it insists that men have the right to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" because they are so "endowed by their Creator." The authors appeal, in their conclusion, to "the Supreme judge of the world" and express their confidence in "the Protection of Divine Providence."

Equally, those who were called to govern the new state saw it as a political society within a religious framework. Washington began his first inaugural address with a prayer to "that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations," asking him to bless a government consecrated "to the liberties and happiness of the people." He added that in "tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good" he was certain he was expressing the sentiments of Congress as well as his own, for "no people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

When finally relinquishing office in 1796, Washington again expressed the wish that "Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence." In a memorable passage he pointed out that "religion and morality are indispensable supports" of "political prosperity" and that the "mere politician" ought to "respect and cherish them." Nor, he added, was a purely secular morality enough in itself: "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." Virtue and morality were the "necessary spring of popular government" and no one who supported it could "look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundations of the fabric." In Washington's eyes, at least, America was in no sense a secular state.

What is still more remarkable is that during the nineteenth century the cold, secularizing wind that progressively denuded government in Europe of its religious foliage left America virtually untouched. The Civil War, like the Revolution, was the political and military expression of a religious event, the product of the second Great Awakening, just as the Revolution

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was the product of the first. Lincoln, like Washington, saw the Deity as the final arbiter of public policy, but in addition he articulated what I would call the most characteristic element in American political philosophy—the belief that the providential plan and the workings of democracy are organically linked.

As he made clear in his first inaugural address, the dispute between North and South, and its resolution, would illustrate the way in which the democratic process was divinely inspired: "Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? . . . If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people." He added that "intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favoured land" could still solve "our present difficulty."

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, he appealed both to world opinion and God for approval; or, as the text has it, "I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favour of Almighty God." Lincoln confided to his cabinet that the timing was determined by what he considered to be divine intervention in the Battle of Antietam. Gideon Welles noted in his diary, "He remarked that he had made a vow—a covenant—that if God gave us the victory in the approaching battle he would consider it an indication of the Divine will, and that it was his duty to move forward in the cause of the slaves. He was satisfied it was right—and confirmed and strengthened in his action by the vow and its results."

Probably no man ever reflected more deeply on the relationship between religion and politics than Lincoln, the archetypal American statesman. To clarify his own thought, he wrote on a slip of paper, "The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present Civil War it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true; that God wills this contest and wills that it should not end yet. By his mere great power on the minds of the now-contestants, he could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began. And, having begun, he could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds."

These reflections he recast into a famous passage in his second inaugural address. It is impossible to imagine Lincoln's European contemporaries Napoleon III, Bismarck, Gambetta, Thiers, Garibaldi, Gavour, Marx, or Disraeli thinking in these terms. Gladstone, it is true, might have done so, but he would not have ventured to publicize his thinking in a critical address—or even to his cabinet colleagues. Lincoln did so in the certainty that most of his countrymen and women could and did think along similar lines.

It is because religion was the determining factor in the two decisive events of American history, the Revolution and the Civil War, that Americans have continued to accord it a special place in their political process, both at the popular and at the highest level. At the time of the Spanish-American War and the annexation of the Philippines, President McKinley said he was "not ashamed" to admit to a gathering of his fellow Methodists that "I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way. . . . There was nothing left for us to do but to take them all and to educate the Philippinos and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died."

No European imperialist, whether a Joseph Chamberlain or a Jules Ferr or a King Leopold, would have dared to justify himself in such a manner, rightly fearing accusations of humbug. But McKinley was patently sincere; no American thought otherwise. No wonder, then, that President Wilson, the first American head of state to operate on the European scene, seemed so rich and strange a figure to European politicians. Keynes, observing him at the Versailles Peace Conference, did not see him as a politician at all: "The president was like a Nonconformist minister, perhaps a Presbyterian." He "thundered commandments from the White House," and when he came to Europe "he could have preached a sermon on any of them or have addressed a stately prayer to the Almighty for their fulfillment, but he could not frame their concrete application to the actual state of Europe."

I believe Keynes' reaction was typical of Europeans. Even today, if European observers were asked to single out what they believe to be the single most pervasive characteristic of American public men in this century, I think they would point to the quasi-religious character of their rhetoric, whether that of a puritan like Coolidge or a Catholic like Kennedy, men of strong faith like Hoover and Reagan or cynics like Roosevelt and Johnson.

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For the truth is, the political culture of the United States is strongly religious, and the reason why it is religious, unlike Europe's, is that the political process and the religious establishment have never been perceived to be in conflict. The harmony of religion and liberty in the United States was the first thing that struck Tocqueville. "In France," he wrote in *Democracy in America* (1835), "I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other; but in America I found that they were intimately united, and that they reigned in common over the same country."

He held that religion was "the foremost of the political institutions" of America, since republican democracy, with its minimal use of authority and the power of government, could not survive without religious sanctions, voluntarily accepted. The point was reiterated more than a century later by President Eisenhower, probably as typical of mid-twentieth-century American religious attitudes as Lincoln was of those prevailing in the mid-nineteenth century. Eisenhower said in 1954 that "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith." He added—and this is still more characteristic—"and I don't care what it is."

Eisenhower's indifference to credal distinctions reflected faithfully the Erasmian nature of religious America. It was and is concerned with moral conduct rather than dogma; American religious groups were judged not by their theology but by the behavior of their adherents. Thus the very diversity of the sects constituted the national religious strength, since all operated within a broad common code of morals, and their competition for souls mirrored the competition of firms for business in the market economy. In both cases the role of the state was to hold the ring and make that competition fair. The First Amendment no more made America a secular state than its antitrust legislation made it a socialist state. By the twentieth century, the American republic had come to rest on a tripod of forces: religion, democracy, and capitalism. All were mutually supportive; each would fall without the others. Indeed, any two would fall without the third. When Coolidge said that "the business of America is business," he might equally well have added "and the religion of America is religion." That was exactly what Eisenhower meant.

The positive merits of American religious pluralism explain why the growth of the state education system never became, as in Europe, a source of conflict. It was nonsectarian without being nonreligious, and its moving spirit, Horace Mann, contended that religious instruction should be taken "to the extremest verge to which it can be carried without invading those rights of conscience which are established by the laws of God, and guaranteed by the constitution of the state." In the early stages, the public schools taught a kind of generalized Protestantism as a form of "character-building." Later, as the makeup of American society broadened to include millions of Catholics and Jews, the specifically religious element was further diluted until it disappeared altogether and was succeeded by what might be called the Spirituality of the Republic, itself based upon the Protestant ethical and moral consensus. So the American Way of Life came to be adopted as the official philosophy of American state education.

Jews and Catholics were able to accept the public school system and the broader national ethic it reflected because the concept of libertarian plurality in religion coincided exactly with their interests. In the 1850s the Irish, nearly all of them Catholics, constituted 35.2 percent of all immigrants, and altogether over 3.5 million of them went to America to escape Protestant government and Protestant landlordism. In 1884, for the first time in history, a leading Catholic prelate was able to endorse a state that did not accord a special status to his church: "There is no conflict between the Catholic Church and America," said Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, "and when I assert, as I now solemnly do, that the principles of the church are in thorough harmony with the interests of the republic, I know in the depths of my soul that I speak the truth."

For immigrant Jews, the motive of religious freedom was still stronger. In the years 1881 to 1914 over two million of them came to the United States, constituting ten percent of all immigrants in the early years of the twentieth century. The overwhelming majority of them came from Russia, Rumania, and Galicia, and their primary motive was to escape systematic discrimination and active persecution on religious grounds. What attracted them to America, above all, was not its secularity but its religiosity; America was not just neutral regarding religions; it was *benevolently* neutral. For Catholics and Jews alike, America had a unique appeal: Their religious practices were not merely tolerated; they were respected.

Had America's open-door policy been maintained in the 1930s and 1940s, there is little doubt that most of the victims of the Holocaust would have found refuge there, just as in recent decades millions of persecuted Catholics from Indochina and Cuba have equated religious freedom with American citizenship. In the 1980s, as in the days of the Mayflower, the United States is the first and obvious choice of anyone anywhere in the world dislocated in the cause of religious freedom.

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Such a country cannot accurately be described as a secular state; indeed, it is America's continuing role as the primary refuge of the persecuted that underlines its religious exceptionalism.

Equally important is the way in which the religious impulse maintains its importance in the dynamics of American public life. This has its negative as well as its positive aspects, however; for if religion is a unifying force by underpinning republicanism and democracy, it can also be a divisive one. Indeed, it is often both at the same time. The first Great Awakening inspired the Revolution and so created America. But it also divided colonial society: A quarter of the nation remained neutral; a quarter was loyalist—forty thousand of them migrated to Canada. The second Great Awakening abolished slavery and launched and won the Civil War, but in the process it tested the Union almost to destruction and left wounds that did not heal for a century. The third Great Awakening (1875 to 1914) produced that great, unsuccessful, and tragic experiment in social engineering Prohibition, which divided the nation in half, set town against country, Catholic against Protestant, native against immigrant, and Middle America against the rest.

What we are seeing now is a fourth Great Awakening, and it too is proving divisive in some ways. In no period has American exceptionalism been more marked, have American religious patterns diverged more sharply from those of the West as a whole, than in the twentieth century. In Europe, nearly all religions were in numerical decline by 1914, a trend never since reversed. In Britain, for instance, church attendance, as a percentage of the population, peaked in the 1880s (as did institutional atheism). In the United States, church affiliation was 43 percent of the population in 1910 and in 1920; but by 1940 it was 49 percent, rising to 55 percent in 1950 and 69 percent in 1960, then falling to 62.4 percent a decade later.

The postwar afflatus, followed by a relative decline that has continued in the mainline churches, has concealed a steady and cumulatively formidable growth in religious conservatism, most marked in the Protestant churches but by no means confined to them. The fourth Great Awakening has gathered speed slowly but now appears to be maturing. Like its predecessors, it is having political consequences, the first being the phenomenon of Reaganism and the revulsion from the liberal collectivism of the 1960s and 1970s. What seems to have happened is that as the mainline churches began to decline, they sought the mutual protection of ecumenicalism through the National and World Council of Churches and the common political platform of ever more extreme forms of liberalism. This move provoked an angry conservative response from their disenfranchised rank and file that took the form of a new and nonelitist variety of ecumenicalism, a de facto unity that stretches across the sects and even into Catholicism.

This popular ecumenicalism is based upon a common reassertion of traditional moral values and of belief in the salient articles of Christianity not as symbols but as plain historical facts. What is unusual about this fourth Awakening is that for the first time it embraces Catholics. Indeed, it appeals to many nonpracticing Christians, and even non-Christians who feel that the Judeo-Christian system of ethics and morals that underlies American republican democracy is in peril and in need of reestablishment. The phenomenon has no counterpart in Europe. It reminds us that religion and politics are organically linked in America, movements in one echoing and reinforcing movements in the other. Just as the strength of religion in America sustains and nurtures democracy, so the vigorous spirit of American democracy continually reinforces popular religion. Thus, while America remains the world's most powerful and enthusiastic champion of democracy, it is likely to preserve its exceptional role as the citadel of voluntary religion. FT

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Principled Immigration

Mary Ann Glendon

Not for the first time, the world finds itself in an age of great movements of peoples. And once again, the United States is confronted with the challenge of absorbing large numbers of newcomers. There are approximately 200 million migrants and refugees worldwide, triple the number estimated by the UN only seventeen years ago. In the United States alone, about a million new immigrants have entered every year since 1990, bringing the total immigrant population to more than 35 million, the largest number in the nation's history. Though Americans take justifiable pride in our history as a "nation of immigrants," the challenges are more complex than those the nation previously surmounted. For sending and receiving countries alike, this is a time of exceptional stress—and yet, a moment that offers opportunities as well.

All too often, these challenges and opportunities are discussed in narrowly economic terms, but an adequate understanding of today's migration patterns would also have to include their relation to the approaching "demographic winter" in the affluent societies of Europe and North America. Despite what population-control advocates had predicted in the 1960s and 1970s, the chief demographic problem facing most countries today is not overpopulation but its opposite. All over the world, even in developing countries, populations are aging. In the wealthier nations, where the process is most advanced, declining birth rates and increased longevity mean that our populations now include a much smaller proportion of children and a much larger proportion of disabled and elderly persons than ever before.

The combination of low birth rates and greater longevity is already bringing the health-care and social-security programs of welfare states into crisis. Social-welfare systems were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the basis of a proportion of nine, or in some cases, seven active workers for every pensioner. Now Europe is approaching three workers per retiree, and those retirees are living much longer. (When those who created the first social-security systems chose sixty-five as the age of eligibility, they were counting on the fact that relatively few people would live beyond that age to become burdens on the state.) With increased longevity has also come increased need for medical care, which has become vastly more expensive than anyone dreamed when public health-care systems were first established.

Although Europe will experience the crunch first, the United States will not be far behind. Our 78.2 million baby boomers are fast approaching retirement age. Over the next twenty-five years, the age structure of the whole country will come to resemble that of "retirement states" like Florida, where a fifth of the population is already over sixty-five. President Bush stressed the urgency of the situation in his 2006 State of the Union Address, warning that "the retirement of the baby-boom generation will put unprecedented strains on the federal government. By 2030, spending for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid alone will be almost 60 percent of the entire federal budget. And that will present future Congresses with impossible choices—staggering tax increases, immense deficits, or deep cuts in every category of spending."

Although awareness of this impending demographic storm is beginning to sink in, policymakers in Europe and the United States tend to frame it only as a "welfare crisis." The falling birth rates that are fueling the welfare crisis, however, are symptomatic of a deeper crisis in beliefs and attitudes—a crisis involving changes in the meanings and values that people attribute to aging and mortality, sex and procreation, marriage, gender, parenthood, relations among the generations, and life itself. That deeper crisis is part of the fallout from what Francis Fukuyama called "The Great Disruption," the revolution in behavior and

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ideas that came on us so suddenly in the late twentieth century that it was unforeseen by any demographer. Beginning in the mid-1960s, and over a mere twenty years, major demographic indicators in the United States and northern Europe rose or fell by a magnitude of 50 percent or more. Birth rates and marriage rates tumbled, while divorce rates, cohabitation rates, and births outside marriage climbed sharply.

Those same years, to be sure, saw impressive advances for many women and members of minority groups. But not all the innovations represented progress. Some tended to undermine the cultural foundations on which free, just, and egalitarian societies depend. For example, the notion gained wide acceptance that behavior in the highly personal areas of sex and marriage is of no concern to anyone other than the "consenting adults" involved. With the passage of time, however, it has become obvious that the actions of private individuals *in the aggregate* exert a profound influence on other individuals and on society as a whole. In fact, when enough individuals behave primarily with regard to their own self-fulfillment, the entire culture is transformed. Affluent Western nations have been engaged in a massive social experiment—an experiment that brought new opportunities and liberties to many adults but that has put mothers, children, and dependents generally at considerable risk.

The family breakdown has had ripple effects on all the social structures that traditionally depended on families for their support and that in turn served as resources for families in times of stress from schools, neighborhoods, and religious groups to local governments and workplace associations. The law has changed rapidly too, becoming less an element of stability and more of an arena for struggles among competing ideas about individual liberty, equality between men and women, human sexuality, marriage, and family life.

Now that the dependent population in affluent countries includes a much smaller proportion of children than ever before, increased pressure on social resources is already provoking generational conflict in the ambitious welfare states of northern Europe. If political deliberation about the impending welfare crisis remains within a framework based primarily on the idea of competition for scarce resources, the outlook for the most vulnerable members of society is grim—as witness the growing normalization of the extermination of persons who become inconvenient and burdensome to maintain at life's frail beginnings and endings.

Opinion leaders in the aging societies of Europe and the United States have generally avoided mentioning the relation between the birth dearth and the need for immigration. Consequently, there has been little discussion of what should be obvious: An affluent society that, for whatever reason, does not welcome babies is going to have to learn to welcome immigrants if it hopes to maintain its economic vigor and its commitments to the health and welfare of its population. The issue is not who will do jobs that Americans don't want. The issue is who will fill the ranks of a labor force that the retiring generation failed to replenish.

Meeting the challenge of the declining ratio between active workers and retirees will require many sorts of adaptations, but replacement migration will have to play a part in crafting effective responses. The good news is that America enjoys several advantages over Europe. To begin with, the United States has a fertility rate of 2.08 babies per woman, while in the European Union the estimated 2005 fertility rate was 1.47, well below the replacement figure of 2.1. More, the United States has a long history of successful experience in absorbing large numbers of new citizens from many parts of the world. (While the absolute number of new immigrants is currently the highest in United States history, it is proportionately less than in previous eras of large-scale immigration.)

A third advantage worth mentioning is that, while there is enormous diversity among the inhabitants of the American hemisphere, most migrants to the United States share certain important beliefs with most of the country's present inhabitants. Not least of these, in the case of Latin America, are religious in nature. According to a 2005 poll of the United States and nine of its closest allies where people were asked how important a role religion plays in their lives, Mexico and the United States came out on top, with 86 percent of Mexican and 84 percent of American respondents saying religion was important to them. European countries, by contrast, are understandably anxious about what will happen to the functioning of their democracies if sizeable groups of immigrants do not come to embrace the core concepts in which those regimes are grounded.

So why isn't the United States glad about Latin American immigration? Part of the answer is the economic cost of large-scale immigration. American wage earners often fear that migrants will drive down wages and take the jobs that remain. This fear is sometimes exaggerated, but it is not unfounded: The consensus among labor economists is that immigration has somewhat reduced the earnings of less-educated, low-wage workers. Many Americans are also concerned about the costs that illegal immigration imposes on taxpayers, with its strain on schools and social services, particularly in the border states. The desire to

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protect the national security of the United States, especially after the trauma of September 11, has played a role as well.

There are also some in the United States who want to close the door to newcomers simply because they are outsiders. Over the course of the twentieth century, that attitude seemed to be fading away, but in recent years sleeping nativist sentiments have been irresponsibly inflamed by anti-immigration groups. A few years ago, I wrote of the financial and ideological connections among extremist anti-immigration groups, radical environmentalists, and aggressive population controllers. What unites that loose coalition in what I called an "iron triangle of exclusion" is their common conviction that border controls and abortion are major defenses against an expanding, threatening, welfare-consuming, and nonwhite underclass. (I never suspected when I wrote those lines that they would cost me a half-year's salary. But on the basis of a promised grant from a foundation whose causes included environmental protection, I had taken an unpaid leave from Harvard. Shortly after my article was published, the foundation reneged on its promise. It turned out that their idea of protecting the environment included keeping out immigrants and keeping poor people from having children.)

Good-faith anxieties about large-scale immigration are sometimes expressed in terms of social costs, such as a feared deleterious effect on the nation's cultural cohesion or the stability of local communities. One would like to take comfort from the fact that similar concerns were expressed at the time of the great migrations of a century ago. Though marked by conflict and competition, the story of those earlier immigrants is, to a great extent, a story of successful integration.

But American culture in those days was characterized by a broader set of common understandings. The picture is more complicated today, with large-scale immigration taking place at a time when it is harder to specify, and therefore harder for a newcomer to discern, a widely shared view of what it means to be American.

To make matters worse, the community structures and religious groups that once played crucial roles in integrating immigrants have themselves been weakened. The old Democratic-party political machines that once brought new citizens into the political process at the local level have vanished. In their place, a new immigrant today encounters political institutions that were developed in response to the black civil-rights movement of the 1960s. The newcomer from Mexico, Brazil, or El Salvador becomes a generic "Latino" in preparation for initiation into the game of divisive racial minority politics.

Overshadowing all other concerns is alarm over the fact that there are 11 or 12 million immigrants in the United States who have entered or remained in the country illegally. To comprehend the depth of feeling attached to that issue, one has to keep in mind that there is no country on Earth where legal values play a more prominent role in the nation's conception of itself than the United States. That was one of the first things Tocqueville noticed in his travels here in the early 1830s, and, as the country has grown larger and more diverse, its reliance on legal values has become ever more salient. In the culture struggles of the late twentieth century, Americans had to rely more heavily than ever on the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the rule of law to serve as unifying forces. Persons who come from societies bound together by shared history, stories, songs, and images can easily overlook or underrate the importance of this aspect of United States culture. Persons who come from societies where formal law is associated with colonialism may well find the United States' emphasis on legality rather strange. But no solution to the challenges of immigration is likely to succeed without taking it into account.

If the United States is to develop realistic, wise, and humane immigration policies, it will need a much fuller and better-informed public discussion. At present, the public debate is too often dominated by immigration alarmists who tend to ignore both our need for replacement migration and the human situations of the men and women who seek opportunities in the United States. Meanwhile, pro-immigration advocates show insufficient attentiveness to the legitimate concerns of citizens, while some others seem to want the economic benefits of migrant labor while turning a blind eye to the toll that the present situation takes on migrants and their families.

In the current atmosphere, it is extremely difficult to sort out the legitimate concerns from the sinister ones. There is thus an urgent need to increase public awareness both of the case for migration and of the likely social costs (both to migrants and the host country) when large-scale migration is not accompanied by well-thought-out strategies for integrating migrant families into the life of the communities where they settle.

To devise effective strategies, it will be necessary to forthrightly confront the issue of legality. As political scientist Peter Skerry has pointed out, "The debate over immigration has been locked into a compelling but misleading framework that distinguishes sharply between legal and illegal immigration. It has been all but impossible to resist the prevailing paradigm which

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assigns all negative outcomes associated with immigration to illegal immigrants, and all benign or positive outcomes to legal immigrants. But the social-order effects of immigration do not easily fit into this neat legal-illegal paradigm."

Nevertheless, given the importance of the rule of law to most Americans, solutions will have to be found that avoid the appearance of rewarding law-breakers, yet shift the focus in individual cases to how the immigrants have comported themselves while in residence here. Proposals that draw on the time-honored concept of rehabilitation after paying one's debt to society seem to point toward a path between amnesty and punitiveness.

We will need to focus especially on the education of immigrant children, for schools are the first sustained point of contact with a new culture. Yet, that path is filled with pitfalls, for, as any parent can testify, integration into contemporary youth culture can pose problems of its own. If the United States is to rise to all these challenges, governments at all levels will have to rely heavily on local communities and organizations, including the faith-based organizations that have played such important roles in easing the transition of migrants in the past, even though these institutions are weaker today than they were in former times.

With migration inevitable, the only question worth asking seems to be: How can the process be influenced so as to maximize the potential advantages and minimize the disadvantages for all concerned? With so much at stake for the United States and Latin America, conditions ought to be favorable for intergovernmental negotiations of the sort begun by the Mexican and U.S. governments in 2001. Those negotiations received a severe setback with the attacks of September 11, 2001. But the difficulties should not be permitted to obscure the many opportunities for cooperation based on the principle of shared responsibility for a shared problem. An honest and complete discussion of the legitimate concerns and objectives of the nations involved could highlight areas where our interests coincide, clarify areas of conflict, and lead to improved understanding of the options each country can reasonably be expected to consider.

The five principles set forth in the 2003 Joint Pastoral Letter issued by the Mexican and U.S. bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, might be helpful in setting the stage for new approaches that could expand the pie for both sending and receiving countries. The letter asserts that (1) persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland; (2) when opportunities are not available at home, persons have the right to migrate to find work to support themselves and their families; (3) sovereign nations have the right to control their boundaries, but economically stronger nations have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows; (4) refugees and asylum seekers fleeing wars and persecutions should be protected; and (5) the human dignity and rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

To those five principles, a sixth should be added: a principle recognizing the need for a highly diverse, rule-of-law society to be careful about the messages it sends to persons who wish to become part of that society. And the bishops might have done well to note, as Pope John Paul II did in *Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, that solidarity imposes duties on the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged: "Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity should not adopt a purely passive attitude, or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all."

Evidently, those general principles are in tension with each other in certain ways. To move from the level of principle to specific programs and policies will require enormous dedication, intelligence, creativity, and goodwill on the part of all concerned. It will require realistic discussion of the human and economic costs and benefits. But one thing seems certain: Given America's relative advantages in this age of great migrations, it would be a tragedy if the sending and receiving countries of our hemisphere did not join forces to explore how these advantages can be maximized in ways that are beneficial to all concerned. Whether we now live in countries of out-migration or in-migration, the choices we make now will determine what kind of societies we bring into being for those Americans, both of North and South, who come after us. FT

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The Churches of Earthly Power

Russell Hittinger

Michael Burleigh's study of European religion and politics requires us to imagine a very different Europe than the one we behold today—not the polity of bureaucrats in Brussels but a Europe of statesmen and revolutionaries who aimed at the most extravagant notions of national destiny.

Beginning with the French Revolution and running through World War I, *Earthly Powers* chronicles more than a century of unrelieved turmoil. No project was too big for the human mind, whether the conquest of nations, the civilizing of colonial peoples, the creation of new religions, or the invention of most every *ism* worth fighting about. Auguste Comte's proposal that Earth's elliptical path be changed to a circular orbit to moderate climatic extremes was emblematic of a culture in which the state, science, and religion pledged their energies to eschatological visions.

Burleigh's main theme is the problem of religion. Here, too, we must put out of our minds any simple notion of the kind of secularization we now see in Europe—for rather than the public square being emptied of religious ideas and debates, religion flooded the newspapers, the bookstores, and the cabinets of government. Such statesmen as Gladstone and Bismarck regarded themselves as experts on matters ecclesiastical and theological, just as prelates fancied themselves as having important things to say on issues of economics and social policy. In the centuries that transpired between the religious wars of the sixteenth century and the formation of nation-states during the nineteenth, Europeans certainly had not lost their appetite for religious opinions, nor the quest for an integral relationship between religion and what Burleigh calls "earthly powers." When Pius IX issued the *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864, the eighty condemned propositions tell us at least as much about the prodigious market of religious ideas as they do about the pontiff's grumpy estimation of "modern civilization."

Meanwhile, there were what Burleigh calls "political religions." Eric Voegelin, in his 1938 book *The Political Religions*, used the term to describe the rise of totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century, but Burleigh thrusts the idea back into the prior century. It is an experience of religion that turns the system of symbols back on this world for their completion and satisfaction—what Voegelin called "world immanent" religion. Surveying the French Revolution, Tocqueville spoke of an "incomplete religion" possessed of saints, sacred calendars, festivals, and messianic ambitions that never transcend the merely chronological. The revolutionaries disembedded the old civic religion from its early medieval belief in Gallic exceptionalism and threw its armies from Moscow to Cairo.

To understand the nineteenth century is to appreciate that these various senses of religion and faith were quite intermingled. Burleigh speaks reasonably enough of a "halfway stage in times when the symbolic world of Christianity was still known reality." Former seminarians and sons of preachers understood the symbols, and they knew how to provide simulacra of traditional and civic religion for the popular imagination. Civic catechisms, based on Lutheran and Tridentine models, were produced throughout Europe to extol nationalism. Garibaldi's catechism captured something of the Italian élan: "Thou shalt not fornicate, unless it be to harm the enemies of Italy." Other catechisms were

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more subtle or earnest, depending on the authors' estimation of the culture.

The point, however, is that political religion could never exist as a completely free-standing thing in nineteenth-century Europe. It depended on the symbolic world of Christianity. In three chapters on the Revolution and its aftermath in France, Burleigh examines one such effort to create and to impose a new religion as an alternative to Christianity. Revolutionaries created new calendars, pantheonized their heroes, invented festivals and liturgies of civic religion, culminating in the proclamation of the Cult of Reason in June 1794.

It was ultimately a flop. Within a few years' time, Napoleon made his détente with the Church, and in 1815 the Bourbons were restored to the throne. But an important lesson was learned. The religion of the Revolution was unable to do two things that are the work of an earthly religion: to produce social solidarity and to constrain the passions. It was learned, then, that an alternative to the traditional religion had to look and feel a lot like the old one.

No less an authority than Edmund Burke spoke this sociological imperative. Religion is the basis of civil society, and both are "integral parts of the same whole." For neither the first nor the last time, it was the political Right that insisted religion must satisfy the two criteria of crowd-control and social solidarity. The Right soon had its chance to put its ideas into effect. At the Congress of Vienna, the great powers restored and otherwise propped up the alliances between throne and altar. Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox leaders figured that, after the Enlightenment and the Revolution, religion was being granted a new lease on life. They were happy to pledge the obedience of the faithful in return. The pope urged Poles to submit to the tsar, who had plundered their churches, seminaries, and universities; the ecumenical patriarch similarly commanded the Greeks to obey the Ottomans.

Of course, by mid-century the throne-and-altar restoration had been swept away by revolutions and political turmoil. Indeed, it failed the twofold test of utility, guaranteeing neither crowd control nor social solidarity. Gradually, the utility argument passed into the hands of progressives, who understood that the Right had sets its sights too low. Rather than being a kind of police force in vestments, proper religion was a valuable resource for achieving the correct kind of order (now conceived as progress) and, above all, of nationalism.

The question remains, however: Why did nationalism become the way to harmonize religion and the state? A short and incomplete answer is that the state, with it apparatus of sovereignty, is a rather distant and cold object of loyalty. It was one thing to create state sovereignties but quite another to make them habitable. States needed to win hearts and minds not merely by obedience but by a sense of belonging.

During the Revolution, the Committee for Public Safety decreed, "We will show this Fatherland to the citizen ceaselessly, in his laws, in his games, in his home, in his loves, in his festivities. We will never leave him to himself alone." The regime managed to infuriate almost everyone and to spark a popular uprising. Other states, notably England, learned to supply the warmth of a national culture much earlier. Italian unification not only emerged rather late but had to work hard to convince the people that it was not somewhat artificial. Gaining momentum throughout the century was the idea that the state is not an end in itself but rather the exemplar, expression, and servant of national culture. Philosophers like Hegel and Fichte, poets like Heine, social scientists like Durkheim, and theologians from Schleiermacher to Troeltsch argued that religion (properly understood) supplies the cultural warmth, the moral inspiration for what Bismarck would call "Practical Christianity."

No one could take very seriously the doctrine of a separation of church (much less religion) and the state. When that term was used—in France in 1905, for example—it did not mean what modern Americans might imagine. It meant, rather, declericalization and a removal of ecclesiastical mediations of public things. In France, it meant specifically transferring church temporalities to cultural associations supervised by a minister of cults.

The spirit of the age was to meld together religion, culture, and state. The right-wing French nationalist Charles Maurras spoke of the gap to be healed between the juridical (*pays légal*) and the real nation (*pays réel*). Folklore abounded with charming notions of the sovereign awakening the sleeping beauty of the nation or, in the other direction, the nation presenting itself as the spotless bride to the sovereign. However the images were worked and reworked, the moral of the story was that two forces split in modernity must go back together.

So powerful was the imperative of unity that Ernst Troeltsch could explain: "The great religious movement of modern times, the reawakened need for religions, develops outside the churches, and by and large outside theology as well." Lest there be doubt where he stood at the time of the Great War, he added, "The German faith is a faith in the inner moral and spiritual content of Germanness, the faith of the Germans in themselves, in their future, in their world mission."

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Earlier in the century, Fichte prophesied the need for a "fourth denomination," neither Lutheran, Reformed, nor Catholic, but a Fatherland religion. Indeed, in 1822, Frederick William III merged Reformed and Lutheran into a Union. The Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini declared: "We fell as a political party; we must rise again as a religious party. . . . Like sons of the same mother . . . the people shall gather around these two altars and offer sacrifice in peace and love."

Talk of divine providence was everywhere in the public domain—not the traditional notions of a general providence of created nature and the special providence of revelation proper. Rather, what could be called a third-track providence, which focused on a particular people specially covenanted and empowered. And if the first two providences were not outright denied, only the third rail was entitled to interpret their truth. The Kaiser asserted: "On me, on me as the German Emperor, the Spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword and His visor." The comment raised eyebrows, but he was guilty of rhetorical excess rather than postulating a singular doctrine. All sides allowed themselves to speak of a holy war, a clash of civilizations directed by invisible powers—Odin against Bethlehem, as one English prelate put it—but interpreted and embodied by earthly ones.

Of course, none of this could have a happy ending. Religious authorities continually misunderstood the force of political religion. Many clergy and laity believed the religiously charged atmosphere of public policy was welcome evidence for the utility of religion in the modern world. To his credit, at the outset of the Great War, Karl Barth defied the political religion, going so far as to deny that Christianity is a religion at all. It was too late.

On this note, Burleigh rather abruptly ends *Earthly Powers*, without aftermath or summary, only the promise of a second volume on the totalitarian era. Given the complicated history Burleigh sets out to explain, no title will exactly capture the material. Even so, his readers might complain that the subtitle—*The Clash of Religion and Politics*—is misleading. There wasn't much of a clash, and that indeed is the scandal of the story.

What conflicts there were tended to erupt within the precincts of Catholicism. One reason is that Rome was never happy with the process of state-formation. In 1648, Innocent X declared the treaties of Westphalia "null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time." The new system of sovereign states caused the slow decline of the twin international colossi of papacy and Holy Roman Empire. But what choice was there except to adapt to what were *de facto* national churches? The Vatican was dependent on Catholic sovereigns to politically and militarily hold the line in the Counter-Reformation and to supply the material infrastructure for the ever-growing missions in the Americas and Asia. For their part, Catholic sovereigns understood that they needn't effect anything so radical as Henry VIII's schism to enjoy a functional supremacy in matters religious.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, there was no consensus in the Catholic world about whether a proper understanding of theology should lead in prudence, if not in principle, to less or more political liberty. There was, however, an emerging consensus on one point: The Church had to extricate itself from state control and to return to what John Courtney Murray would later call the "Gregorian state of the question."

He was referring to Gregory VII. The proposition that the liberty of the Church was the precondition for tackling the issue of how Catholicism is to be incarnated in states and nations began on the political Right. In the early days of the Restoration, the doyen of Catholic conservatives, Joseph de Maistre, insisted that Gregory VII's work be completed in modern times. He remorselessly criticized the ecclesiology of national churches, taunting Gallicans to change the creed to read, "I believe in divided and in dependent churches." He insisted that "nothing is accomplished" without overthrowing the "magic castle" of regalism, and he accused kings and princes of a "great rebellion." A succession of Catholic writers picked up the theme. Félicité de Lamennais, Dom Guéranger, Henri Lacordaire, John Henry Newman, Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, and Antonio Rosmini, among others, wrote tracts on the Gregorian reform and its application to the present crisis.

None of this was initially well received in Rome. Joseph de Maistre felt slighted by Pius VII who didn't respond enthusiastically to an autographed copy of *Du Pape*, which had made the papacy out to be the very center of the *périmètre sacre*, the sacred boundary. Four decades later, Antonio Rosmini, a papalist, but moderately liberal in political matters, received even shabbier treatment for arguing that state nomination of bishops was one of Christ's five wounds. Only Guéranger managed to beat this drum while keeping intact his credentials in Rome. He was one of the only players in the story who grasped how the Gregorian theme would lead to the First Vatican Council.

In any event, this kind of talk appeared to popes not as conservative but as radical, which indeed it was. Three popes of the Restoration era heard the message and dismissed it. Replaying Canossa meant the loss of

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the papal states, which depended on the military and political support of Catholic sovereigns.

And then Pius IX lost his temporal dominions in 1860. In the years leading up to this loss, he had issued numerous acerbic claims and complaints about the liberty of the Church. No one paid much attention until they showed up in the 1864 *Syllabus of Errors*. The eighty condemned propositions were culled from encyclicals and occasional decrees, and then roughly grouped according to major themes. The European press had considerable sport with the last proposition, "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization." Catholic spin-meisters worked overtime to put the best construction on it. Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans wrote the most famous defense: "Where do we find it written," he demanded, "'Outside the *Code Napoléon* there is no salvation'?"

Underneath the journalistic mockery of the *Syllabus*, cabinets and courts in European capitals suspected that Dupanloup had the right interpretation. They viewed with alarm sections 19 to 55 of the *Syllabus*, which taken together suggested that Pius would pull the plug on familiar Church-state relations. Temporal sovereigns would no longer enjoy an inherent right to cogovern the Church. Their suspicion was confirmed in 1868 when Rome issued a bull of indiction for a Vatican Council but left out the customary invitation to the temporal sovereigns to send ambassadors, the *oratores*. Even more alarming was a rumor that a Vatican committee had drafted a document titled *De Ecclesia Christi*, which included several chapters and canons on Church and state.

In France, Émile Ollivier declared in the chamber of deputies that the pope had in effect introduced the separation of church and state: "Yes, this is a new fact, a new deed indeed that the disseverance between the laical society and the religious society is put into effect by the pope's own hand." He went on to say, "Undoubtedly, gentlemen, I know that Rome earnestly wishes to separate itself from the State, but She does not want the State to separate itself from Her." Neatly, Ollivier managed to summarize what the nineteenth-century Catholic imagination attributed to Gregory VII: one-way separation. It was the mirror image of what state nationalisms had claimed for themselves. In France, Germany, and England there was some talk about military intervention to stop this mutinous act in its tracks. But the ever-prudent English decided to let events take their own turn.

As it turned out, the bishops at the council could reach no consensus. No overarching theory could overcome all of the practical concerns and consequences. Most of the those attending were under pressure by the home governments to stay clear of these propositions. So they reached a conclusion without a theoretical apparatus and awarded the papacy the principle of universal jurisdiction, indirectly settling the matter. There would be no national churches, no inherent right of temporal sovereigns to nominate or veto the episcopal office. The Austrian government, the remnant of the old Roman Empire in the West, promptly annulled her concordat with the Church.

The point to be drawn is that, in the summer of 1870, Rome had, at best, only very tense relationships with the former Catholic nations. When the British envoy asked Pius' secretary of state, Cardinal Antonelli, why the Vatican failed to invite ambassadors from Catholic nations to the council, the secretary said that "exclusively Catholic governments had virtually ceased to exist."

This was an exaggeration, but one that was more true than false. Surveying the political landscape, one could find no model for how the Catholic religion could be properly aligned with the twin forces of state sovereignty and nationalism. At least nothing comparable to Anglicanism in England, or Protestantism in Prussia, or Orthodoxy in Russia. For several decades, Catholic liberals urged the adoption of the Belgian model, for its 1831 constitution was the first of its kind to abandon traditional powers to nominate bishops or veto ecclesiastical business. Burleigh mistakenly refers to the Belgian constitution as a "separation" of church and state, though Belgium, without the props of a concordat, supplied clerical salaries and religious education with state subsidies. Unfortunately, the Belgian experiment happened in the thick of the Restoration era. By 1870, when it would have looked like a very good model indeed, Belgium had drifted into prickly clerical-versus-anticlerical politics.

The political poverty of the Church can be measured by the fact that Rome had a deep and abiding mistrust of party politics, especially parties with the Catholic label. The fifteen-hundred-year habit of dealing with Catholic sovereigns was not easily translated into non-kingly politics. The Center party in Germany was usually on the outs with the Vatican. In Italy, the popes imposed the *non expedit*, forbidding Catholics from participating in the new regime. It was lifted only in 1919, on the condition that the new Popular Italian party remain nondenominational. While the Church taught clearly enough about powers higher than the state, its approach to things lower than the state tended to emphasize guilds and associations—which were more like sodalities than they were like political parties.

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In this way, Catholic activism from below could be kept within the orbit of ecclesiastical authority and Church unity could be preserved.

Out of its strengths and weaknesses, European Catholicism was at least partially immunized against the temptation of giving itself corporately over to the new political religion of nationalism. Burleigh writes: "Since Roman Catholics were primarily attached to the universal Church, they had difficulties in regarding the nation as the highest form of human community that God had established, something which they had in common with the Enlightenment belief in human universality, however much they may have despised and feared other aspects of that variegated project."

The proofs of Burleigh's interesting generalization are the Leonine encyclicals, beginning with *Aeterni Patris*. Leo XIII had little use for the current species of Romanticism, especially as resourced by the political Right, which, in France, was quite capable of conjoining religion and historical nostalgia to a blood-and-ethnicity politic. Indeed, Leo's sorest problem came from the intransigent Right. Leo's program was shaped by his worry that Catholicism had not responded adequately to the Enlightenment. This explains why his encyclicals return over and over again to the problem of the relation between faith and reason, the differentiation of the sciences, the role of natural law, the basis and scope of the natural right of property, the question of whether there are pre-political states of nature, and whether Deism is an adequate natural theology.

In France, monarchist and traditionalist Catholics were appalled that Leo had gone so far as to insist that, by nature, there are plural legitimate forms of polity. In a letter addressed to all French Catholics, he wrote that, while the Church must cross the "changeable ocean of human affairs," it has no legitimate prudence over its "essential constitution," received directly from Christ; but, "in regard to purely human societies, it is an oft-repeated historical fact that time, that great transformer of all things here below, operates great changes in their political institutions."

For Leo the two expressions of providence—natural law and the apodictic divine revelation—set boundaries but did not cancel out prudence. Prudence, functioning within the bounds of absolute norms, made unnecessary any appeal to a providence that made human history absolute. In an 1892 allocution, Leo XIII told his cardinals that the Church's temporal mission would center on "faith embodied in the conscience of peoples rather than on restoration of medieval institutions." His magisterial letters focused on a formation of conscience and prudence, and on how to distinguish the two from the heterodox notions of historical destiny.

The most important, long-lasting, and interesting Catholic movement after 1789 to take up the question of providence and prudence was the cult of the Sacred Heart, with its companion cults arising from Marian apparitions. The cult of the Sacred Heart was politically charged from the beginning, and it would assume different political and spiritual complexions as Catholicism was stripped of its political authority. Still, while the popes and the laity did not always see eye-to-eye on the utility of political parties, they were joined in their appreciation of the Sacred Heart. The cult had medieval antecedents, but it is the modern one that is of interest to us. Burleigh mentions it, but it deserves something more than a passing note. For the cult ambiguously contained the material for potent Catholic nationalisms as well as for a state and nation transcending universalism. A twenty-six-year-old Visitationist nun in the convent of Paray-le-Monial, Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, began receiving apparitions of the Sacred Heart in 1673. From February to August of 1689 Marguerite-Marie passed to her superior, first, a message to Catholic kings, and then a special message to the Sun King, Louis XIV. If only Louis would put the image of the Heart on his military standards and consecrate his government to the Passion of Christ, he would become a Constantine. Eventually, the Heart become a political and military symbol not only of French exceptionalism but of all Catholic political restoration, well into the nineteenth century.

In *Annum Sacrum*, Leo made clear that, as the Church entered the twentieth century, it should no longer place its temporal hopes in the arrangements of the old political order. Once, he said, divine providence raised up a Constantine to deliver the Church from "the yoke of the Caesars." Today, however, "another blessed and heavenly token is offered to our sight—the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, with a cross rising from it and shining forth with dazzling splendor amidst flames of love. In that Sacred Heart all our hopes should be placed, and from it the salvation of men is to be confidently besought." Leo understood that the Heart had to be affirmed without the political doctrines of nationalism and exceptionalism. He called the dedication "the greatest act of my pontificate."

To complete the international direction of Leo's *Annum Sacrum*, Pius XI published *Quas Primas* in 1925, declaring the Feast of Christ the King. It was written, among other reasons, to tame the Maurrasian nationalist movement with its debased, secularized ver-

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sion of special national covenants. A few months after the encyclical was published, Pius addressed 191 descendents of Catholic martyrs from the French Revolution, who were urged to reject "integral nationalism" in favor of "integral obedience" to Christ. Indeed, in the late 1920s it became a custom to contextualize the Heart in light of Christ the King.

Today, it will seem a strange thing to make Jesus' heart visually subordinate to Christ's kingship, but once upon a time it was a profound exercise of political theology. It was nothing less than the way to preserve the Catholic imagination from what I have called the third-rail providences of nationalisms and political religions. The human and earthly Jesus of the Heart is also the fully transcendent king.

Burleigh skates the surface of this history in *Earthly Powers*. His most thought-provoking insight is that the argument for the utility of religion typically begins on the Right as an effort to preserve the role of religion in buttressing social order but moves inexorably to the progressives, with their visions of providential exceptionalism and nationalism. Yet he does not elaborate the pattern in a way that allows us to draw a lesson. He leaves out, for instance, the American amalgamation of political and civic religions, with its peculiar version of third-rail providence. By the late nineteenth century, the American version was so important that it requires an historian of Europe to give at least a sidelong glance at what Lincoln meant by the "almost-chosen people," and the subsequent volatility of the "almost." Finally Burleigh raises, without adequate reflection, a most interesting prospect. In Western modernity, atheism never quite bottoms out. A religion—most likely, an ersatz or political religion—always emerges to cushion its fall and to redirect its energies. Is this a good thing? Is it the role of religion to keep atheism from bottoming out? *Earthly Powers* never quite reckons with the questions that transcend the story he tells. FT

The Observer

We'll never touch the empty space inside
the center of an atom, settle on
a singularity, or stand astride
event horizons—there, but really gone;
no common sense can comprehend extremes
in mass, velocity, and time. For that,
we have to take as proof the chalkboard dreams
of physicists who see the Cheshire cat.

But I can hold what numbers can't depict
(good thing, because I'm terrible at math),
a sum that calculations can't predict:
the self who walks beside me down this path—
who smiles and laughs when I declare, "It's true,
no quantum formula accounts for you."

Robert W. Crawford

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Islam and Us

George Cardinal Pell

Can Islam and the Western democracies live together peacefully? Optimists seize on the assurance of specialists that jihad is primarily a matter of spiritual striving and that the extension of this concept to terrorism is a distortion of Qur'anic teaching. They emphasize Islam's self-description as a "religion of peace." They point to the roots Islam has in common with Judaism and Christianity and to the worship the three great monotheistic religions offer to the one true God. There is also the common commitment that Muslims and Christians have to the family and to the defense of life, and the record of cooperation in recent decades between Muslim nations, the Holy See, and such countries as the United States in defending life.

Many commentators draw attention to the diversity of Muslim life—Sunni, Shiite, Sufi, and their myriad variations—and the different forms that Muslim devotion can take in such places as Indonesia and the Balkans, on the one hand, and Iran and Nigeria, on the other. Stress is laid on the widely divergent interpretations of the Qur'an and Shari'a, and the capacity Islam has shown throughout its history for developing new interpretations.

Optimists also take heart from the cultural achievements of Islam in the Middle Ages and from the accounts of toleration extended to Jewish and Christian subjects of Muslim rule as "people of the Book." Some deny or minimize the importance of Islam as a source of terrorism, or of the problems that more generally afflict Muslim countries, blaming such factors as tribalism and interethnic enmity; the long-term legacy of colonialism and Western domination; the way that oil revenues distort economic development in the rich Muslim states and sustain oligarchic rule; the poverty and political oppression in Muslim countries in Africa; the situation of the Palestinians and the alleged "problem" of the State of Israel; and the way that globalization has undermined or destroyed traditional life and imposed alien values on Muslims and others.

Indonesia and Turkey are pointed to as examples of successful Muslim societies, and the success of such countries as Australia and the United States as "melting pots," creating stable and successful societies while absorbing people from different cultures and religions, is often invoked as a reason for trust and confidence in the growing Muslim populations in the West. The phenomenal capacity of modernity to weaken gradually the attachment of individuals to family, religion, and traditional ways of life, and to commodify and assimilate developments that originate in hostility to modernity, is also relied on to "normalize" Muslims in Western countries.

Reasons for optimism are also sometimes drawn from the totalitarian nature of Islamist ideology and from the brutality and rigidity of Islamist rule, exemplified in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Just as the secular Nazi and Communist totalitarianisms of the twentieth century proved unsustainable because of the enormous toll they exacted on human life and creativity, so too will the religious totalitarianism of radical Islam. This assessment draws on a more general underlying cause for hope: our common humanity. Most ordinary people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, share the desire for peace, stability, and prosperity for themselves and their families.

On the pessimistic side of the equation, concern begins with the Qur'an itself. I started, in a recent reading of the Qur'an, to note invocations to violence—and abandoned the exercise after fifty or sixty pages, as there are so many of them. In coming to an appreciation of the true meaning of jihad, for example, it is important to bear in mind the difference between the suras written during Mohammed's thirteen years in Mecca and those written after he had

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based himself at Medina. Irenic interpretations of the Qur'an typically draw heavily on the suras written in Mecca, when Mohammed was without military power and still hoped to win people through preaching and religious activity. After emigrating to Medina, Mohammed formed an alliance with two Yemeni tribes and the spread of Islam through conquest and coercion began. One calculation is that Mohammed engaged in seventy-eight battles, only one of which, the Battle of the Ditch, was defensive. The suras from the Medina period reflect this decisive change.

The predominant grammatical form in which jihad is used in the Qur'an carries the sense of fighting or waging war. A different form of the verb in Arabic means "striving" or "struggling," and English translations sometimes use this form as a way of euphemistically rendering the Qur'an's incitements to war against unbelievers. But in any case, the so-called Verses of the Sword (suras 9:5 and 9:36), coming as they do in what scholars generally believe to be one of the last suras revealed to Mohammed, are taken to abrogate a large number of earlier verses on the subject (more than 140, according to one calculation). The suggestion that jihad is primarily a matter of spiritual striving is also contemptuously rejected by some Islamic writers on the subject. One writer warns that "the temptation to reinterpret both text and history to suit 'politically correct' requirements is the first trap to be avoided," before going on to complain that "there are some Muslims today, for instance, who will convert jihad into a holy bath rather than a holy war, as if it is nothing more than an injunction to cleanse yourself from within."

The Christian and Jewish sources of the Qur'an are an important basis for dialogue and mutual understanding, although there are difficulties. Perhaps foremost among them is the understanding of God. It is true that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam claim Abraham as their father and the God of Abraham as their God. I accept, with reservations, the claim that Jews, Christians, and Muslims worship the same God, but this has been disputed, not only by Christians but by Muslims as well. It is difficult to recognize the God of the New Testament in the God of the Qur'an, and two very different concepts of the human person have emerged from the Christian and Muslim understandings of God. This has had significant consequences for the different cultures that Christianity and Islam have given rise to and for the scope of what is possible within them.

The history of Muslim relations with Christians and Jews does not offer reasons for optimism in the way that some people easily assume. The claims of Muslim tolerance of Christian and Jewish minorities are largely mythical, as the history of Islamic conquest and domination in the Middle East, the Iberian peninsula, and the Balkans makes abundantly clear. In the territory of modern-day Spain and Portugal, which was ruled by Muslims from 716 and not finally cleared of Muslim rule until the surrender of Granada in 1491, Christians and Jews were tolerated only as dhimmis, subject to punitive taxation, legal discrimination, and a range of minor and major humiliations. If a dhimmi harmed a Muslim, his entire community would forfeit protection and be freely subject to pillage, enslavement, and murder. Harsh reprisals—including mutilations, deportations, and crucifixions—were imposed on Christians who appealed for help to the Christian kings or who were suspected of having converted to Islam opportunistically. Raiding parties were sent out several times every year against the Spanish kingdoms in the north, and also against France and Italy, for loot and slaves. The caliph in Andalusia maintained an army of tens of thousand of Christian slaves from all over Europe, and he also kept a harem of captured Christian women. The Jewish community in the Iberian peninsula suffered similar discriminations and penalties, including restrictions on how they could dress. A pogrom in Granada in 1066 annihilated the Jewish population there and killed more than five thousand people.

Arab rule in Spain and Portugal was a disaster for Christians and Jews, as was Turkish rule in the Balkans. The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans commenced in the mid-fifteenth century and was completed over the following two hundred years. Churches were destroyed or converted into mosques, and the Jewish and Christian populations became subject to forcible relocation and slavery. The extension or withdrawal of protection depended entirely on the disposition of the Ottoman ruler of the time. Christians who refused to apostatize were taxed and subject to conscript labor. Where the practice of the faith was not strictly prohibited, it was frustrated—for example, by making the only legal market day Sunday. Violent persecution was a constant threat. One scholar estimates that, before the Greek war of independence in 1828, the Ottomans executed eleven patriarchs of Constantinople, nearly one hundred bishops, and several thousand priests, deacons, and monks. Laypeople were prohibited from practicing certain professions and trades, even sometimes from riding a horse with a saddle, and until the early eighteenth century their adolescent sons lived under the threat of the military enslavement and forced conversion that provided possibly one million janissary soldiers to the Ottomans during their rule. Under Byzantine rule the peninsula enjoyed a high level of

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economic productivity and cultural development. This was swept away by the Ottoman conquest and replaced with a general and protracted decline in productivity.

The history of Islam's detrimental impact on economic and cultural development returns us to the nature of Islam itself. For those of a pessimistic outlook, this is probably the most intractable problem in considering Islam and democracy. What is the capacity for theological development within Islam?

In the Muslim understanding, the Qur'an comes directly from God, unmediated. Mohammed simply wrote down God's eternal and immutable words as they were dictated to him by the Archangel Gabriel. It cannot be changed, and to make the Qur'an the subject of critical analysis and reflection is either to assert human authority over divine revelation (a blasphemy) or to question its divine character. The Bible, in contrast, is a product of human cooperation with divine inspiration. It arises from the encounter between God and man, an encounter characterized by reciprocity, which in Christianity is underscored by a Trinitarian understanding of God. This gives Christianity a dynamic that not only favors the development of doctrine within strict limits but also requires both critical analysis and the application of its principles to changed circumstances. It also requires a teaching authority.

Errors of fact, inconsistencies, and anachronisms in the Qur'an are not unknown to scholars, but it is difficult for Muslims to discuss these matters openly. In 2004 a scholar who writes under the pseudonym Christoph Luxenberg published a book in German setting out detailed evidence that the original language of the Qur'an was a dialect of Aramaic known as Syriac. Syriac or Syro-Aramaic was the written language of the Near East during Mohammed's time, and Arabic did not assume written form until 150 years after his death. Luxenberg argues that the Qur'an that has come down to us in Arabic is partially a mistranscription of the original Syriac. He suggests that the Qur'an has its basis in the texts of the Syriac Christian liturgy, and in particular in the Syriac lectionary, which provides the origin for the Arabic word "qur'an." As one scholarly reviewer observed, if Luxenberg is correct the writers who transcribed the Qur'an into Arabic from Syriac a century and a half after Mohammed's death transformed it from a text that was "more or less harmonious with the New Testament and Syriac Christian liturgy and literature to one that [was] distinct, of independent origin." This is a large claim.

It is not surprising that much textual analysis is carried out pseudonymously. Death threats and violence are frequently directed against Islamic scholars who question the divine origin of the Qur'an. The call for critical consideration of the Qur'an, even simply of its seventh-century legislative injunctions, is rejected by hard-line Muslim leaders. Preaching recently to those making the hajj pilgrimage to Mount Arafat, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia told pilgrims that "there is a war against our creed, against our culture, under the pretext of fighting terrorism. We should stand firm and united in protecting our religion. Islam's enemies want to empty our religion of its content and meaning. But the soldiers of God will be victorious."

Considered strictly on its own terms, Islam is not a tolerant religion, and its capacity for far-reaching renovation is severely limited. To stop at this proposition, however, is to neglect the way these facts are mitigated or exacerbated by the human factor. History has more than its share of surprises. Indonesia has been a successful democracy (with limitations) since its independence after the Second World War. Islam in Indonesia has been tempered significantly both by indigenous animism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (and also by the influence of Sufism). As a consequence, in most of the country, Islam is syncretistic and moderate, with a strong mystical leaning. This moderate Islam is sustained and fostered in particular by organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama, which runs schools across the country and which, with thirty or forty million members, is one of the largest Muslim organizations in the world.

The situation in Indonesia is quite different from that in Pakistan, the country with one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. Of Pakistani Muslims, 75 percent are Sunni, and most of these adhere to the more liberal Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. But religious belief in Pakistan is being radicalized because organizations, very different from Indonesia's Nahdatul Ulama, have stepped in to fill the void in education created by years of neglect by military rulers. Pakistan spends only 1.8 percent of GDP on education, and 71 percent of government schools are without electricity, 40 percent without water, and 15 percent without a proper building. The population is only 42 percent literate, and this proportion is falling. Such neglect makes it easy for radical Islamic groups with funding from foreign countries to gain ground. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of religious schools (or madrassas) opening in Pakistan, and it is estimated that they are now educating perhaps 800,000 students.

Indonesia and Pakistan show that there is a range of factors affecting the prospects for a successful Islamic engagement with democracy. Peace and respect for human rights are the most desirable end points, but the development of democracy alone will not suffice. It is

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not enough to assume that giving people the vote will automatically favor moderation. In its influence on both religion and politics, the culture is crucial.

There are some who resist this conclusion vehemently. In 2002, the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen argued that religion is no more important than any other part or aspect of human endeavor or interest. He also challenged the idea that within culture religious faith typically plays a decisive part in the development of individual self-understanding. Against this, Sen argued for a characteristically secular understanding of the human person, constituted above all else by sovereign choice. Each of us has many interests, convictions, connections, and affiliations, "but none of them has a unique and preordained role in defining [the] person." Rather, "we must insist on the liberty to see ourselves as we would choose to see ourselves, deciding on the relative importance that we would like to attach to our membership in the different groups to which we belong. The central issue, in sum, is freedom."

This does work for some people in the rich, developed Western world, particularly those without strong attachments to religion. Doubtless it has ideological appeal to many among the elites. But as a basis for engagement with people of profound religious conviction, it is radically deficient. Sen's words demonstrate that the high secularism of our elites is handicapped in comprehending the challenge that Islam poses.

One example of the secular incomprehension of religion may be the blithe encouragement of large-scale Islamic migration into Western nations, particularly in Europe. Of course they were invited to meet the need for labor and in some cases to assuage guilt for a colonial past.

If religion rarely influences personal behavior in a significant way, then the religious identity of migrants is irrelevant. I suspect that some anti-Christians—for example, the Spanish Socialists—might have seen Muslims as a useful counterweight to Catholicism, another factor to bring religion into public disrepute. Probably, too, they had been confident that Western forces would be too strong for such a primitive religious viewpoint, which would melt down like much of European Christianity. This could prove to be a spectacular misjudgment.

During the Cold War, secularists, especially those who were repentant Communists, were well equipped to generate and sustain resistance to an antireligious and totalitarian enemy. In the present challenge it is religious people who are better-equipped to understand the situation with Islam. Radicalism has always had a way of filling emptiness, but, if we are going to help the moderate forces within Islam defeat the extreme variants, we need to take seriously the personal consequences of religious faith. We also need to understand the secular sources of emptiness and despair and how to meet them, so that people will choose life over death. This is another place where religious people have an edge. Western secularists regularly have trouble understanding religious faith in their own societies and are often at sea when it comes to addressing the meaninglessness that secularism spawns. An anorexic vision of democracy and the human person is no match for Islam.

The war against terrorism is only one aspect of the challenge. Perhaps more important is the struggle in the Islamic world between moderate forces and extremists, especially when we set this against the enormous demographic shifts likely to occur across the world, the relative changes in population of the West, the Islamic and Asian worlds, and the growth of Islam in a childless Europe.

Every great nation and religion has shadows and indeed crimes in its history. This is certainly true of Catholicism and of all Christian denominations. And it is legitimate to ask our Islamic partners in dialogue whether they believe that the peaceful suras of the Qur'an are abrogated by the verses of the sword. Is the program of military expansion to be resumed when possible? Do they believe that democratic majorities of Muslims in Europe would impose shari'a law? Can we discuss Islamic history and even the hermeneutical problems around the origins of the Qur'an without threats of violence?

Obviously some of these questions about the future cannot be answered, but the issues should be discussed. Useful dialogue means that participants grapple with the truth, and in this issue of Islam and the West the stakes are too high for fundamental misunderstandings. Both Muslims and Christians are helped by accurately identifying what are core and enduring doctrines, by identifying what issues can be discussed together usefully, by identifying those who are genuine friends, seekers after truth and cooperation—and by separating them from those who only appear to be friends. FT

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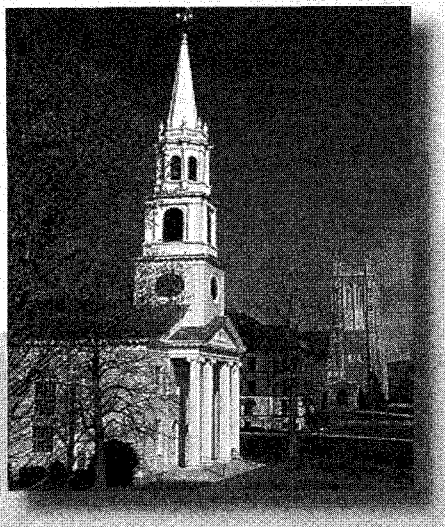

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Books in Review

Unchurching

LEAVING CHURCH
by BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR
HarperSanFrancisco, 224 pages, $23.95

Reviewed by Jason Byassee

THERE ARE REALLY two books here. One is a pastoral memoir about Taylor's falling out with her parish and the resulting shift in her vocation. The other is a critical reassessment of Christianity as such. The first book is a reminder of why Taylor is an exemplary homiletician. The other book, however, is a disappointment, especially for those who appreciate the author of the first book.

I remember not a few Sundays as a preacher in which Taylor bailed me out—not with a cheat sheet for me to copy, but with the offer of new eyes with which to see a biblical text's particularity. Naturally I am not alone in this. She was included on a Baylor University list of the twelve most effective preachers in the English-speaking world ten years ago, and so featured in *Newsweek*. Taylor's eye for the particular is on display in her new book, as she describes Grace-Calvary Church in Clarkesville, Georgia, the church she pastored for five and half years: "I put my hands flat on the side of the church. Was this what happened to wood that soaked up a hundred and fifty years' worth of prayers? Did all of that devotion seep into the grain like incense so that any passerby could catch a whiff of it?"

Fellow presiders over the Eucharist will recognize her description of distributing the elements: "When our hands met on the silver cup, there was a charged moment in which we became one body, less in

JASON BYASSEE *is assistant editor of the* Christian Century *and adjunct professor of theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.*

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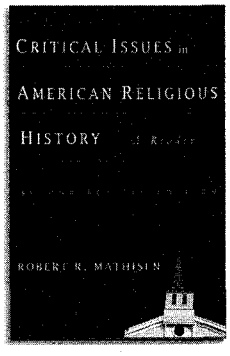

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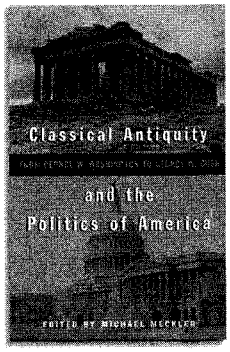

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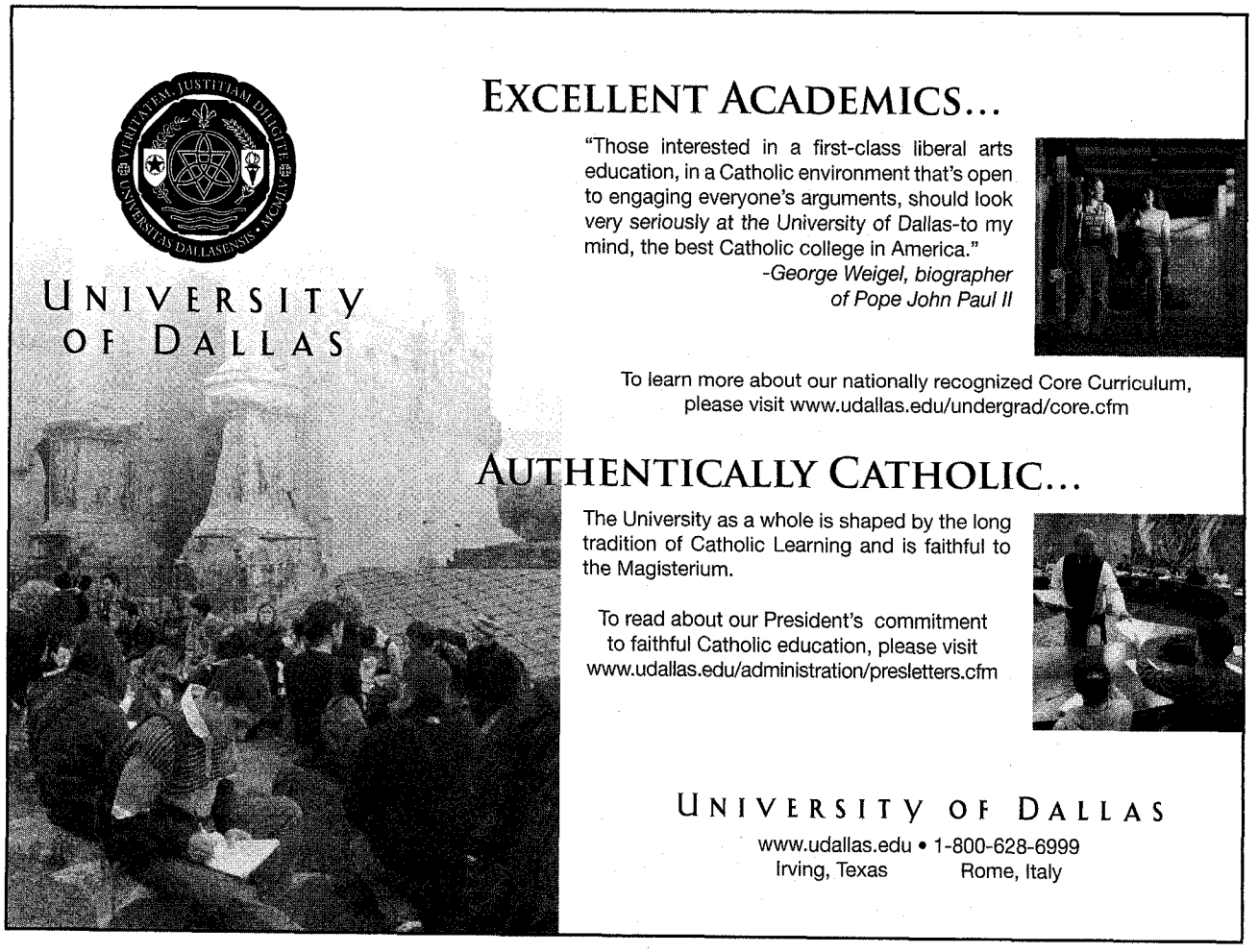
theory than in fact. . . . I focused on people's hands instead of their faces. An unguarded face is a deep well; you don't go there casually, without ropes or lamps. So I practiced what some religious orders still call 'custody of the eyes.'"

ANY PASTOR WILL SMILE knowingly at the odd bits of knowledge one picks up on this job. "Like most clergy, I know how to post bond, lead an intervention, commit someone to a mental-health-care facility, hide a woman from her violent husband, visit an inmate on death row, and close the eyes of a dead body." And they will laugh out loud remembering experiences like Taylor's, when a perpetually needy woman telephoned her and announced, "Martha is sitting on the toilet, and we are out of toilet paper. If I come over right now, could you write me a check to the grocery store so she can get up?"

Such prose might suggest the book is merely decorative or pretty—but let us remember its title: *Leaving Church*. The book describes in detail the process of disenchantment from parish ministry. Taylor went to seminary in the first place less out of a sense of call to ordination and more from a desire to draw as close to God as she could. But her efforts to excel in her parish actually worked *against* that original purpose, to the point that her pastoral work became a "betrayal" of her calling. Instead of deep prayer or communion with God in creation, Taylor merely "pecked God on the cheek the same way I did [her husband] Ed, drying up inside for want of making love."

Like many other successful pastors, she came to see her own efforts as indispensable to God's work, and, also like many other pastors, she found that the petty cruelty of the most needy of her parishioners took a toll. During a discussion about whether to build an addition to the church to accommodate its great growth in membership, one man stood up and announced that the church would not go "into debt to build you a preaching emporium." Not surprisingly, Taylor beat a hasty departure from ministry to teach world religions at a nearby college.

Had her book ended there, with this first incident of "leaving the Church," I would have had no hesitation in buying it for my many minister friends. But Taylor proceeds to blame not only herself or her church for the burnout in Clarkesville, but Christianity as such. Why is Jesus the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model for priesthood—she frequently wonders—he who never turned anyone away, whom we cannot but fail to emulate? And while we're questioning things—why was she never told about the manifold historical problems in the Bible or of Church history? Did no one think to tell her that the Greek etymology for "heresy" was the verb, "to choose"? (She credits Elaine Pagels for this "revelation.") No wonder the Church has felt threatened by change ever since. And why did Mother Church feel the need to protect her from playing with children of other faiths, when in fact members of those faiths are often much more likely to "do justice and love kindness" than those of her own household? Why was she taught that creation is "inert" and less important than heaven, when, say, Native American faiths tell a greater truth, of its liveliness and danger and suffusion with divine presence?

This second episode of "leaving the Church" seems to be the one from which the book takes its title. Yet she will not leave entirely—she will stay on the margins, ministering to others who also find the Church too threatened by such honest questioning as hers. Her vocation now is to teach Piedmont College's undergraduates to be as tolerant toward other religions as she has become.

What confuses me about these parting criticisms of the Church Taylor long served is not their trenchancy—they have been raised in every generation of the Church's life. It is Taylor's own historical narrative. I could understand her feeling cheated if she had studied at some backwoods school on the way to serving a know-nothing church, but Taylor studied at Emory University and Yale Divinity School in the 1960s and 1970s. Since then she has lectured or preached at scores of major colleges, seminaries, and divinity schools around the world. Precisely *who* failed to tell her of Christianity's various scriptural and historical problems? Taylor is an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church (USA)—an institution hardly fearful of questions or criticisms from the left. Her paeans of praise to other religions are hardly edgy. Christian tradition has always held that God has promised to work among his covenant people but is not thereby *unable* to work elsewhere—vestiges of truth remain wherever there are creatures created in God's image.

Not only can Taylor's criticisms be met with less difficulty than she imagines. They can actually be met in

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her own earlier work. In fact, the criticisms are frequently answered even in this book—as when she quotes, say, Julian of Norwich or Meister Eckhart or Bonhoeffer against the Church. In one place she names the company she will keep with herself on the margins, including Martin Luther, Francis of Assisi, Hildegard of Bingen, Peter Abelard, John Scotus Erigena, Tertullian, Origen, and Jesus. Precisely who is trying to keep these risky figures off seminary syllabi and out of sermons? Taylor's critiques feel like the proverbial battering ram through the open door.

For those younger than Taylor, it seems apparent that for any interesting rebellion we have to leave off the deconstructive work and reembrace historic Christian doctrine and practice. I'm glad Taylor helped teach me what a joy that embrace can be—before she herself left the Church.

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Jarring Sects

A JEALOUS GOD: SCIENCE'S CRUSADE AGAINST RELIGION
by PAMELA R. WINNICK
Nelson Current, 368 pages, $25.99

Reviewed by Wesley J. Smith

IS SCIENCE REALLY AT WAR with religion? Pamela Winnick's answer is a firm and worried yes. And in *A Jealous God* she demonstrates that this war threatens not only religion but science as well—with the threat coming from the very people who perceive themselves to be science's most dedicated defenders. The ideology known as philosophical scientism is erasing the boundary between science and politics as it continually blurs crucial distinctions between objective knowledge and subjective belief.

As a result, trust in science—earned over the last few hundred years by advances that have materially improved the human condition—is eroding. For example, 56 percent of respondents to a recent poll conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University agreed that "scientific research these days doesn't pay enough attention to the moral values of society."

Science, properly understood, is a method for gaining and applying knowledge about the workings of the physical and natural worlds. Science is apolitical. It is also amoral. Its purview is the three-dimensional universe and its elements, which scientists can observe, identify, measure, and test.

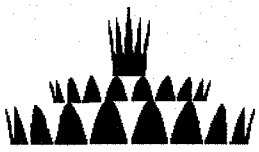
Scientism is almost the mirror opposite: Where science is objective, scientism is subjective. Science is about gaining information. Scientism is about proselytizing for a belief. Science is a means. Scientism is an end. Where science sticks to facts and testing hypotheses, scientism purports to convey Truth.

It is important to distinguish these contrasting approaches. Genomic science, for example, tells us that humans share many genes in common with animals. But it was scientism speaking when journalist John Darnton wrote that Darwin's theory of evolution means that the universe is "godless" and that "we are all of us, dogs and barnacles, pigeons and crabgrass, the same in the eyes of nature, equally remarkable and equally dispensable." Similarly, science can tell us that an embryo is a distinct human organism—that is, a nascent human life. It cannot, however, tell us what moral value this entity should be accorded.

With this in mind, it is clear that science is not the "jealous god" against which Winnick warns in her withering attack. It is scientism, which promotes a stark materialistic utilitarianism as the way to achieve progress. Moreover, I came away from reading *A Jealous God* convinced that scientism's real target is not necessarily religion. (After all, some believers in scientism also claim to believe in God and may even be self-proclaimed Christians.) Rather, it is the belief in intrinsic human dignity and moral worth that scientism really disdains because that view is seen by its adherents as inhibiting science and restricting human freedom.

Orthodox religion is loathed by scientism's adherents precisely because believers energetically promote the sanctity of human life as the paramount value in society. This means that there are limits, a concept that is anathema to scientism's adherents. (Orthodox believers are not the only ones who stand up for the equal dignity of all human life, of course. Winnick is described in the book's publicity material as "a secular Jewish Democrat." The noted civil libertari-

WESLEY J. SMITH *is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute. He is currently researching a book on the animal-liberation movement.*



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an and atheist Nat Hentoff is one of the nation's most eloquent defenders of the equal dignity of all human life.)

Early on, Winnick wrenchingly demonstrates the potential anti-human consequences of pursuing scientism's view of scientific research. During the late 1960s and into the 1970s, scientists conducted human experiments on living fetuses, justified by the philosophical assertion that fetuses are only "potential" human life.

One such experiment, which won the Foundation Prize Award from the American Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology, is described by Winnick in sickening detail: "In a 1968 study called the 'Artificial Placenta,' a twenty-six-week-old fetus, weighing more than a pound, was obtained from a fourteen-year-old girl, presumably from a therapeutic abortion. Along with fourteen other fetuses, it was immersed in a liquid containing oxygen and kept alive a full five hours." The study itself explains that the fetus made "irregular gasping movements, twice a minute, . . . but there was not proper respiration." Once the pumping of oxygenated blood was stopped, however, "the gasping respiratory efforts increased to 8 to 10 times a minute. . . . The fetus died 21 minutes after leaving the circuit."

Back then, the notion of the sanctity of human life was still strong, and when this and other living fetal experiments—injecting drugs into fetuses *in utero*, for example—were publicized, there was an outcry. But as Winnick notes, thanks in large part to the then fledgling field of bioethics, "the stage was set: the invention of 'potential life' would give researchers moral *carte blanche* to destroy, desecrate, and replicate human life." This is the agenda advocated by many proponents of human therapeutic cloning and embryonic stem-cell research today, with considerable success. In 2004, New Jersey legalized the creation of cloned human embryos, their implantation in wombs, and their gestation through the ninth month, requiring their killing only at the very point of birth.

Winnick also explores how, beginning in the 1960s, the materialistic values of scientism were insinuated into the life-sciences curricula. At that time, apparently in reaction to the government's support of physics and other hard sciences after the lunching of *Sputnik*, several biologists formed the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, which Winnick claims was created to promote the theory of evolution as "biology's path to prominence and recognition."

Led by Bentley Glass, a eugenicist who "promoted population control, and advocated the establishment of genetic 'clinics' to weed out the 'defective,'" the study group berated the "Judeo-Christian worldview" and demanded knocking humankind off the pedestal of exceptionalism. "There was," Winnick writes, a "subtle political side to the reduction of man to a mere animal. If man is no more than a creature of instinct, he is malleable to state control; he can be trained and bred like any other species."

There was also a strong scientism exhibited in the group's sponsored books, mixed with a push for population control: "To BSCS leaders, biology wasn't just science; it was politics, *their* politics. Not only did biology now include the functions of living beings, it also included 'responsible parenthood.' In BSCS parlance, 'responsible parenthood' did not mean a parent's responsibility to clothe and feed a child; what it really meant was the 'responsibility' to have as few children as possible—or better yet, none at all."

The resulting textbooks did not improve science education. Indeed, complaints about our students' poor science performance have only grown.

The answer? Apparently more of the same. Winnick reports that the

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National Academy of Sciences has developed a new curriculum, which once again mixes progressive politics in with science—including the belittling of religion and the promotion of population control.

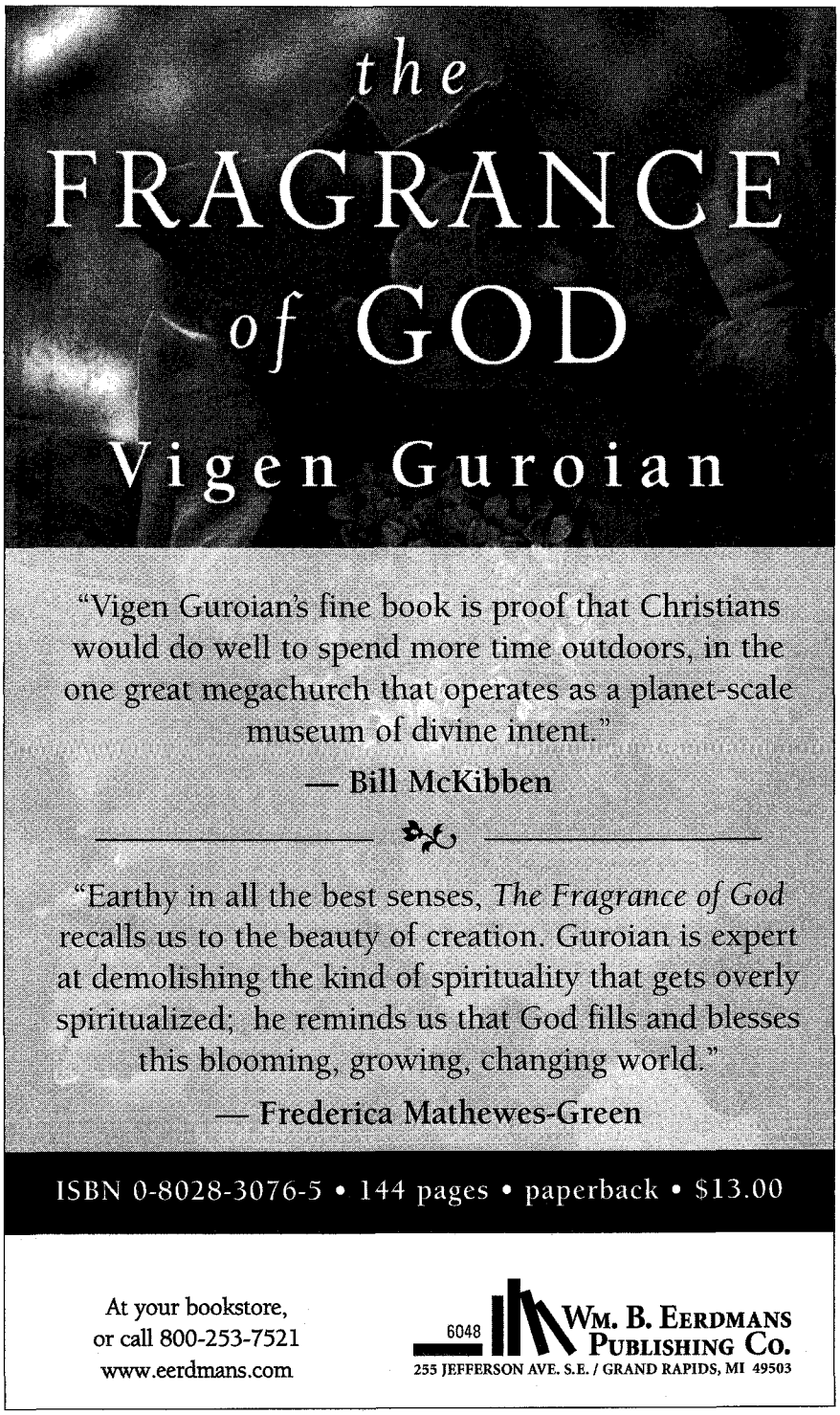
Winnick also tackles the heated controversy over the teaching of evolution in high school and whether students should be told about heterodox countervailing theories in science class. This is an important topic worthy of in-depth research and crackerjack reporting. Unfortunately, that is precisely what is missing, making this section the weak link in an otherwise mostly very strong book.

Part of the problem is that the author spends far too much time on the old young-earth-creationism debates that are now firmly settled to be religious teaching. This leaves far too little space to devote to current, more-complex, and more-intriguing controversies such as the substantial challenge being mounted to philosophical and scientific Darwinism by proponents of Intelligent Design.

As a consequence of her too-light touch, I was left wondering whether most high-school science books limit their presentation of the theory of evolution to the science, or whether students are also inculcated in *philosophical* Darwinism that misuses Darwin as, in Winnick's words, "a pulpit for nonbelief."

WINNICK REGAINS her footing in the closing chapters of *A Jealous God*, where she exposes the shameless hype of those pushing the miracle cures that we have been told for years are just around the corner. First it was fetal-tissue implants. Then it was gene therapy. Then it was embryonic stem-cell research. Then it was human cloning. Winnick points out how those who voiced reasonable ethical qualms about many of these emerging technologies were derided as religious fanatics and antiscience Luddites. And she notes that, far from being objective scientists, many advocates for these technologies argue from deeply felt ideological biases and have financial interests that are almost always ignored by a scientism-compliant media.

A Jealous God is a powerful and important book. It not only proves that the current science debates are often not actually about science, but it persuasively demonstrates that we are in danger of becoming dominated by the amoral values of philosophical scientism to the detriment not only of religion but of science itself.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Faust in the USSR

THE DREAM LIFE OF SUKHANOV
by OLGA GRUSHIN
Putnam, 354 pages, $24.95

Reviewed by Cynthia Grenier

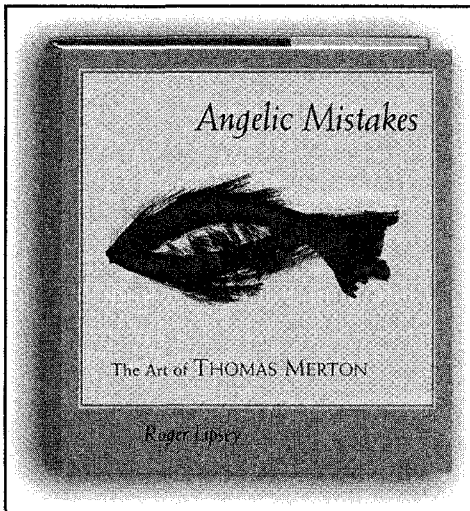
OLGA GRUSHIN, A young Russian-born woman, has written a quite extraordinary novel. In it she tells how a man named Sukhanov sold his soul to become one of the cosseted few who enjoy all the comforts accorded to a member of the Soviet elite: a large, admirably outfitted apartment in the Arbat, a chauffeured limousine, a country dacha, his children educated in select schools, even the occasional trip abroad. But the year is 1985. Gorbachev sits in the Kremlin. Glasnost is in the air and life is about to change for fifty-six-year-old Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov.

CYNTHIA GRENIER *is a writer living in Washington, D.C.*

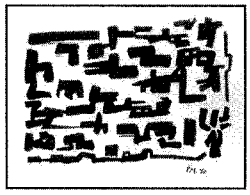
Here it seems apposite to tell of my encounter with one such member of the Soviet elite. It happened during the 1959 film festival in Czechoslovakia, where I got to know the Soviet film director Grigory Kozinstsev, one of the Soviet Union's most distinguished directors. He'd made his first film at seventeen, in the heyday of the Russian Revolution, when a burst of creative energy in all the arts flourished all too briefly before Stalin laid a heavy hand on all that was imaginative. Since that time, Kozinstsev continued to direct feature films, but fewer as the years passed. Some, like his *Maxim Trilogy*, are still remembered and esteemed by film historians. But all his films hewed faithfully to the party line of the day.

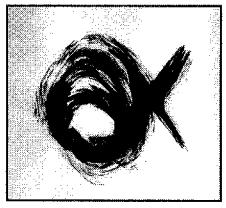
In Karlovy Vary, we got to talking. His English was fluent. I had seen a number of his earlier films at Paris Cinémathèque and was very curious to get to know a real live Soviet artist. One day we went walking through the woods around the famous Czech watering spa for hours. (It was understood in those days that, when someone from the Iron Curtain wanted to speak freely with someone from the West, they would go for a walk—a long walk.) Not that Kozintsev ever openly criticized the regime, even on our walk. Soviets allowed abroad at that time were extremely circumspect in what they chose to say about their country outside its borders. They never wanted to risk denial of another trip abroad.

But there were little indications of how he felt. I'd been reading the short stories of Isaac Babel and said how much I liked them. Kozintsev's face lit up. "I knew Babel," which surprised me, as Babel had long been considered a non-person in the USSR. (It has now been reported from records of the KBG that Babel, arrested and interrogated, was shot in the cellars of the infamous Lubyanka



Angelic Mistakes
The Art of THOMAS MERTON
Roger Lipsey





The first in-depth consideration of Merton's fascinating visual artwork of the 1960s, *Angelic Mistakes* includes 34 of his brush paintings and prints, each of which is accompanied by an excerpt from his writing of the period.

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prison in 1940. He was "rehabilitated" in 1954 after Stalin's death.) Kozinstsev then offered to send me his copy of Babel's short stories given him by Babel himself. To this day I regret having refused his offer, thinking then my command of Russian was such it was unlikely I'd ever be able to read them.

We exchanged addresses. At his request, I would send him various recently published scholarly works on Shakespeare, and in return he'd send me eighteenth-century Russian woodcuts, one of which hangs in my apartment to this day.

The last time I was to see him was at the Brussels World Fair. At a cocktail reception, Kozintsev greeted me in a rather subdued manner—in Czechoslovakia we'd hugged and kissed goodbye. He introduced me to two large, burly men at his side as "Soviet cultural attaches." That was about the limit of our conversation—except a few days later at a special screening being shown in the round in a darkened room, Kozintsev came up to me, pressing my hand for a moment. "You understand?" he said very quietly. And I did.

Although his film of *Hamlet* was shown at the Venice film festival in 1964, Kozintsev was not there. The film received a standing ovation and was awarded the Special Jury Prize. Interestingly, Shostakovitch composed the original score and Boris Pasternak had translated Shakespeare's verses. As a movie critic I reviewed it for the *International Herald Tribune*, terming it "a great film." He was to make only one more movie, *King Lear* in 1973, dying the following year at sixty-eight.

I had nearly forgotten Kozintsev until I read Olga Grushin's *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*. Grushin captures perfectly the little world of the Soviet elite, with all its compromises and its hypocrisies required to maintain access to the comfortable life denied the majority of Soviet citizens. Surely it is not by chance that Grushin chose for her epigraph Revelation 3:15-17: "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, poor, blind, and naked."

In telling Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov's story, she makes skillful use of several different voices, often a straightforward third-person narration, sometimes sliding on occasion in mid-paragraph to the first person. Past and present mingle effortlessly giving the reader a look into the soul of a man at various stages of his life. Through them all we learn finally what Sukhanov thinks must be the meaning of his life: "And it was only after twenty-three years of mute crawling through the mud—only after he had felt the smooth taste of betrayal on his lips and the chilly weight of thirty pieces of silver in his sweaty palm, only after he had learned about the slow fattening of the soul, the anguish of wasted chances, the pain of love slipping away, the soft, horrifying slide into death—yes, it was only then that the elixir of life was granted to him and his resurrection assured."

Sukhanov's slow descent on the slippery slope can be understood and has no doubt been experienced in many another country and culture. His prospective father-in-law, one of the USSR's most distinguished artists, sets him on the downward path. Back when he had been a young and ambitious artist, he ran into some potential trouble with the official artistic world by exhibiting a painting in a show at the Manege, a celebrated show that Khrushchev visited and denounced, red-faced and bellowing, calling the paintings amoral, anti-Soviet, and fit only for covering urinals.

As a kindly Mephistophelean figure, his future father-in-law Malinin sets his feet on the path. "Let me

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think—yes, I've just agreed to do an article for a good friend of mine. He happens to be the editor of our leading art magazine, *Art of the World*. I could arrange to add you as my coauthor; he owes me a favor. Of course, you'd be the one actually to write the text." The working title of the article is "Surrealism and Other Western 'Isms' as Manifestations of Capitalist Insolvency." At first Sukhanov is indignant and repelled. "What you are suggesting is nothing but betrayal of myself, my friends, of everything I hold true."

But Malinin's observation is that he would not be sacrificing himself for a noble principle, but "For what would you sacrifice yourself?—And not just yourself, may I remind you, but your mother and your wife as well." And so Sukhanov makes his pact with the Devil.

Grushin reveals her protagonist's early years, when he was filled with enthusiasm and hope and belief in his own talent as an artist. We learn how his wife, daughter of the distinguished artist, fell in love with him precisely because she thought he was not like her father—that he had integrity. And Sukhanov rediscovers an old friend, Belkin, who had kept the faith and has remained pitifully poor but is at peace with himself. In the end, Sukhanov may no longer have his chauffeured limousine, but he may have found his soul—and God as well.

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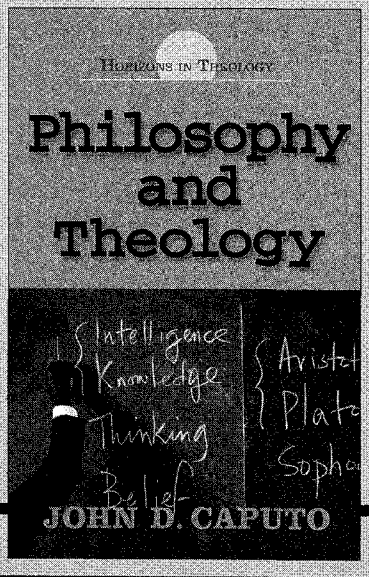

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Our Bodies, Ourselves

DESIGNER EVOLUTION: A TRANSHUMANIST MANIFESTO
by SIMON YOUNG
Prometheus, 417 pages, $28

THE SINGULARITY IS NEAR: WHEN HUMANS TRANSCEND BIOLOGY
by RAY KURZWEIL
Viking, 672 pages, $29.95

Reviewed by Charles T. Rubin

IF THE TRANSHUMANISTS are right, the story of humanity is drawing to a close. Transhumanists are those who hope for the day when the combined capacities of nanotechnology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and robotics will open amazing new doors—overcoming the necessity of eating, strengthening the body's self-repair abilities, allowing direct transfer of thought from mind to mind, and creating artificial realities indistinguishable from the real world. An ever closer merging of man and machine will lead to fundamental alterations in our biology, if not to a complete transfer of the human mind into machine form, providing those who make the switch with a kind of immortality.

Transhumanist confidence in the inevitability of their future is based on the rapid rate of technological change over the past century—a rate of change that is accelerating. Even if we eschew the most outlandish of the transhumanist aspirations, we are still gaining the capacity to achieve them. The cutting-edge technologies are being developed not for the transhumanists but for widely held and attractive goods. The first step toward reading each other's minds, for example, is already being taken in compassionate experiments to see if quadriplegics can use computers through brain implants. Who wants to argue with that?

Certainly not the transhumanists, who are riding the wave of compassion toward their goal. Take a look at Simon Young's *Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto*, for example. There is much not to like about the book: It's repetitive and filled with awkward neologisms of the author's invention. But beneath its defects are the key premises of the transhumanist vision. The centerpiece is the claim that "superbiology" (advanced biotechnology) will create a "New Modernity" in which people will at last be able to be happy and healthy and "perhaps defeat death itself." Young's "totalized philosophical system" supports a "new ethic of self-enhancement" that will guide "homo cyberneticus" to become "the steersman of his own destiny."

Young thinks some of the most powerful schools of thought in the modern world do not want people to be happy and healthy. Postmodern antirationalism, theistic resignation, psychological environmentalism, nature-worshiping environmentalism, New Age self-denial, Darwinian selfishness, Freudian reductionism, bioluddite conservatism, liberal statism, existentialist despair, and various other memes all contribute to maintaining the chains of our "biological servitude." It may seem odd that people are so ready to be miserable and sick, but Young is quite serious about it. Religion ("Is there anything quite as nonsensical as religious belief?") is particularly hard-hit. For Young, faith is nothing other than an effort to deflect attention from, justify, or redeem in some other world, the many nasty (and historically preponderant) realities like disease, suffering, and death.

Young recognizes that one can be wealthy and healthy and yet miserable. He is thus most interested in what superbiology will do for us psychologically. Psychology, he argues at length, has yet to come to grips with the fact that mental health is essentially a matter of neurochemistry. He has his own theory about how personality types stem from the balances and imbalances of various neurochemicals, so the argument proceeds on the assumption that making unhappy people happy requires reconstruction of the chemical balance of the brain.

Young accounts for human feelings in terms of their genetic origins and evolutionary significance (love means "Stay and protect this person—he/she is likely to help you complete your programming for survival and reproduction")—as well as the neurochemistry behind them (love is the product of serotonin and oxytocin). He provides genetic and evolutionary explanations for seven "positive" and thirteen "negative" feelings. Obviously Young is not the first to attempt a mechanistic and materialistic account of mind and human personality, but his account is noteworthy both for the reductionism of what is "explained" and for the complex passions he does not even attempt to explain.

As Young builds his transhumanist ethics on his transhumanist psychology, this thinness in the one infects the other. The "nurethic" of a good life comes down to a defense of the possibility and desirability of benevolence as a basis for feeling good about oneself and one's place in the world. Young acknowledges that there is nothing new about preaching benevolence, although he believes he has a scientific defense for it. So "designer evolution" means designing ourselves to be ever more benevolent by getting our neurochemistry right and promoting developments that will allow more people to be happier, healthier, and longer-lived. Then we will all be able to live as we choose, so long as our choices do not harm social harmony. Nurethics is an ethic, then, in the same way that "make your dreams come true" is an ethic.

Starting from the ethical wisdom of the greeting card, Young at least

CHARLES T. RUBIN *is assistant professor of political science at Duquesne University, and author of the forthcoming* Why Be Human?, *a critical look at transhumanism.*

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claims to have learned the lesson of totalitarianism. He is not interested in drugging the water supply, and like many transhumanists he is libertarian in being wary of state power. He wants to win the meme war because he wants people to be convinced to go to "BEST Centers" ("Bioenhancement Self-design Technologies") for themselves. Free choice is the way human beings will take hold of their evolutionary future and fulfill the Will to Evolve, the very meaning of life: "*Live to Evolve, Evolve to Live!*"

The moral substance of the imperative *Evolve!* can be seen when Young attempts to meet the objection that his BEST Centers will be the province of the rich and successful. That's perfectly true, he benevolently admits: "This is called living in the free world." Eventually the price of BEST technologies will come down, and everybody will be "leveled up." Yet Young's own psychology posits that unsuccessful people are unsuccessful because of the barriers set up by their neurochemical imbalances. So his soft libertarianism means that the state will not deprive anybody of help but that those who need help most will be last to get it.

The point is not to task Young for failure to imagine some utopian plan by which all suffering is ended, but to show how he skims across the surface of human passions and interests. Competition, glory, pride, and the various other motives and pleasures of being on top he would doubtless want to design out or sublimate to higher purposes. He is confident that, as designers of our own evolution, we can eliminate the bad aspects of our evolutionary heritage. Yet he is aware that benevolence is in short supply; he delights in pointing out what religious preaching has not accomplished in this regard. That's why a transhumanist manifesto is necessary—to convince people of what they should want to become. But dress it up in as much neurobabble as you like, he is still preaching, and that is not enough to cut the knot that his own assumptions have tied. Must we not be benevolent already in order freely to design ourselves to be benevolent?

Which brings us to Ray Kurzweil, who in *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* finishes the job that Young starts. It is hardly surprising that a highly successful inventor and technology maven like Kurzweil should make the primary focus of his thick tome the technical means by which humans and their machine creations will merge ever more closely. For Kurzweil, there is no problem for which some idea does not open the door to a solution. The power of human ideas to change the world is undergoing a vast acceleration. "Within several decades," he writes, "information-based technologies will encompass all human knowledge and proficiency." This new form of intel-

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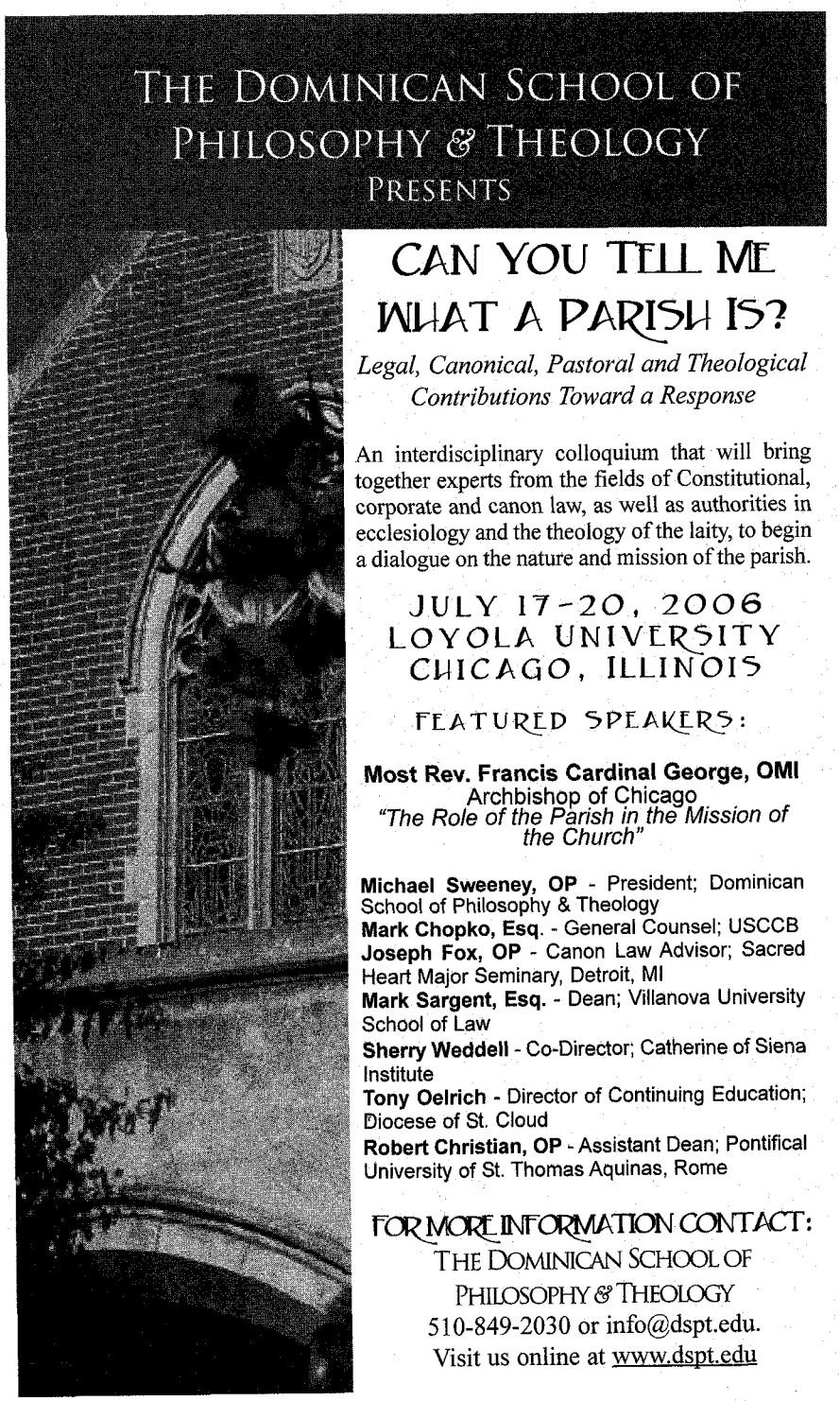
ligence will then build on itself, so that by the end of this century "the nonbiological portion of our intelligence will be trillions of trillions of times more powerful than unaided human intelligence." The result he calls "The Singularity"—"a rupture in the fabric of history" that will "allow us to transcend the limitations of our biological bodies and brains. We will gain power over our fates. Our mortality will be in our own hands."

And that is only the beginning. The descendants of human intelligence will, in search of the resources necessary to meet the ever increasing computational demands of their ever more complex virtual worlds, move out into a universe that Kurzweil believes is likely devoid of other intelligence. In barely imaginable forms they will everywhere transform into patterns the chaos that chance has created, until the universe becomes mind thinking itself.

This remarkable process starts with reverse engineering the human brain, modeling in computers the patterns of brain activity that make us what we are. These computers will do everything we can—but much better, because their circuits are faster, more flexible, and more readily interconnected than our neurons. As a result, scientific and technological progress will accelerate even faster when these computers take over creative design and discovery. Following their instructions, nanotechnology will allow more-productive and creative manipulation of matter. More-complete virtual realities will mean more-intimate links between the patterns embodied biologically in our brains and the always improving intelligence embodied in computers. Sooner or later, accepting the limitations of biological body and brain will seem foolish when one can be anything one wants in a virtual reality or through a nanotechnology-created embodiment that can be modified in a moment.

Kurzweil openly acknowledges one kind of problem with this future. He is well aware that great dangers come along with great power. Because he believes that his "law of accelerating returns" means that the technological developments creating these dangers are inevitable, however, the only thing to be done is to find technological responses. Fortunately, he argues, nanotechnology can help solve the dangers created by genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence will be necessary to solve the problems created by nanotechnology.

So that's taken care of—except that Kurzweil admits that there is no technical solution to the problem that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artificial intelligence might take a dislike to its human creators. His almost completely apolitical view of the world produces an absurd response to this dilemma: "We have no choice but to strengthen our defenses while we apply these quickening technologies to advance our human values, despite an apparent lack of consensus on what those values should be." Caught up with thinking about technical failures, he misses that disputes over value is exactly what makes these new technologies dangerous. Is it not irresponsible simply to plead necessity in the face of those dangers?

In fact, Kurzweil is aware of this kind of irresponsibility; he co-wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* to lament the decision to make public the genome for the 1918 flu pandemic. But beyond his tactical willingness to keep dangerous information closely held, his strategic solution to the problem is to make human values increasingly irrelevant—by promising human extinction. He tries to argue that he doesn't intend this goal, but it's clear his heart is not in it, for his argument is verbal sleight of hand. Kurzweil is sure a machine-based pattern is "human," because for him what is human is the ability to self-transcend—everything else we associate with the word is apparently not essential. So if self-transcending human beings become something else, that something else remains human. And if extinction of biological man is the price of what we can become, Kurzweil is ready to pay it.

Of course, he doesn't want to force anyone to merge with machines. But Kurzweil cannot really imagine a good reason for failing to do so; and, as a little cartoon in the book charmingly suggests, those who reject his future will die off soon enough anyway. This is an all-too-typical form of modern philanthropy, which loves human beings not as they are but as the philanthropist believes they should be. The results are, as usual, indistinguishable from misanthropy.

A Christian People

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: VOLUMES 1 AND 2
edited by DENIS JANZ, RICHARD A. HORSLEY, AND VIRGINIA BURRUS
Fortress, 318 and 322 pages, $35 each

Reviewed by Thomas F.X. Noble

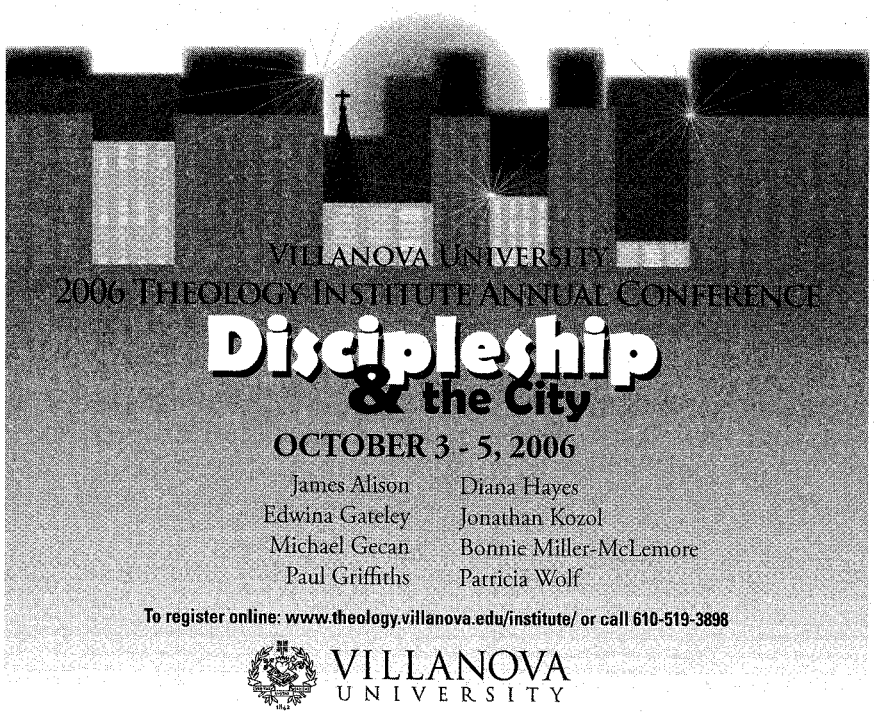
IT ALL BEGAN WITH EUSEBIUS, the garrulous bishop of Caesarea who invented ecclesiastical history around A.D. 325 with a work that was, in various versions and translations, profoundly influential for more than a millennium. Rich in details, some of which are verifiable, Eusebius' history tells the story of cities and their bishops. Church history was his theme.

For a long time, writers followed his lead. In the nineteenth century, Church history produced luminaries among whom John Henry Newman, Henry Hart Milman, and Philip Schaff might be mentioned as representative figures, and their work still repays and delights the reader. Among their many twentieth-century successors, several names stand out: Kenneth Scott Latourette, Roland Bainton, Owen Chadwick, and Paul Johnson. What all these writers have in common is an interest in the ecclesial communities into which historical Christianity organized itself.

In the post-Reformation era the "History of Christianity" emerged as an alternative approach. Its focus was aimed more at Christian thought than at Christian churches. Primarily this approach permitted Protestants to embrace Catholic writers without acknowledging that they were Catholic. The basic approach was similar regardless of which side of the confessional divide one stood on. Readers turned pages to move from one great thinker and one great book to another.

In the last generation or so, both of these approaches have lost ground in the academy to "History of Reli-

THOMAS F.X. NOBLE *is Robert M. Conway Director of the Medieval Institute and Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame.*



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gion," which can mean Christianity as the lived experience of the faithful or else the rediscovery of the marginal, excluded, oppressed, and forgotten. One could mention many studies that range from the instructive and inspiring to the weird and ideological.

Enter this *People's History*. Right away I must say that volumes one and two vary greatly. The scholarship and the writing in volume two are appreciably higher. Volume one treats basically the age of Christ and the apostolic era. Its editor and authors rail endlessly about "Gentlemen's History" and its blindness to ordinary people. So these authors aim to find those ordinary men and women and tell their story. Which men and women? "Christ believers," and participants in "Jesus Movements," who were illiterate and powerless. They are uniformly referred to as "peasants," a term that does not capture well either urban Christians or Galilean fisherman.

The sociology, so to speak, of early Christianity has taken some sharp turns in recent years. For a long time, among both the genial and the hostile, the earliest Christians were seen as marginal: slaves and silly women. Then scholars began to find a broader, more complex swathe of ancient society among those who embraced the Gospel. But *A People's History of Christianity* puts us back a generation. It's peasants all the way down. The "elite" are the enemy, the running dogs of Roman imperialism. What is more, they eventually invented Christianity and the Church and suppressed the "people."

Richard Horsley defines the project this way: "Our investigations do not depend heavily on the standard assumptions, approaches, and interpretive accounts of New Testament studies, which have been heavily determined by Christian theology. Rather, the exploration of new materials, new questions, and different questions addressed to familiar texts requires us to work critically toward the new assumptions and approaches that seem appropriate to the focus on the people and their communities, social forms, and distinctive modes of communication."

This statement is unobjectionable until one realizes that it is a sweetly baited trap. Horsley continues: "We focus on the religious aspects in these case studies. . . . Yet insofar as religion is inseparable from the political-economic aspects of ancient life, religious motives and expressions can be understood only in the political-economic context in which they are embedded." This is, therefore, Christianity without Christ. Belief is a matter of social and economic imperatives. Jesus was, at least to his "believers," a revolutionary. Frantz Fanon comes up in volume one. Salvation is absent.

And what about those new materials and new questions? Caveat lector! Some valuable use is made of recent archaeological findings. The Jewish historian Josephus is mined for the occasional factoid or chided for taking the side and perspective of the elite. Mainly, however, the authors of the chapters in volume one base their interpretations on the gospels, the Pauline and catholic epistles, and Revelation.

These materials are often unforthcoming, however, so they must be "read against the grain" and scrutinized for "hidden transcripts." On one level, this is fair enough. But in this book, the authors have awarded themselves a license to steal. Several of the authors also permit themselves unbridled usage of the "Q" document to find their "transcripts." Q, of course, does not exist. It was a construct of nineteenth-century German (it stands for *Quelle*, "source") higher criticism, designed to account for the *logoi*, the sayings of Christ, that appear so frequently and similarly in Matthew and Luke. Ironically, these authors caricature modern historical studies while violating the most elementary canons of source-based scholarship.

Ordinary believers will be baffled and offended by a good deal of what they encounter in volume one, and serious historians will be irked, but all is not bleak. The authors create a credible picture of just how brutal and oppressive the Romans actually were. They also reveal the different pressures exerted by the Roman administration and their local toadies in the various locales of first-century Palestine.

These demonstrations form helpful backgrounds to the daily experience of ordinary people in biblical times. Several chapters limn the politically charged environment that produced four great rebellions between the 160s B.C. and A.D. 132-35. These accounts will help readers of the New Testament to contextualize some of

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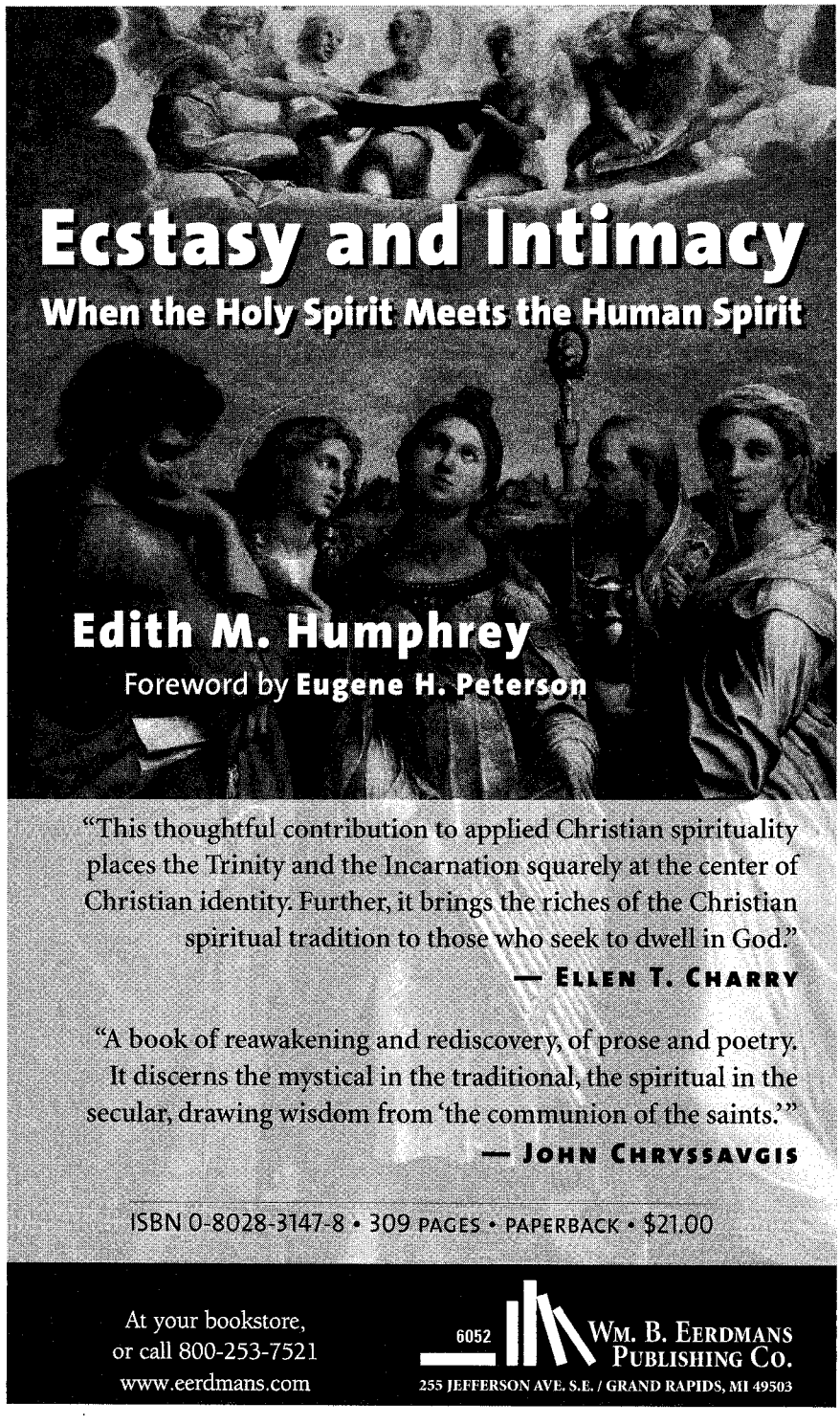
Jesus' political discourses.

One intriguing chapter extracts twenty-six "birth prophecy" stories from the Old and New Testaments and uses them to discern something about the hopes and aspirations of women. Those aspirations in this telling are all about political liberation, which seems to me to do scant justice to the vision of the women or to the beauty of their stories, but the stories are "good to think with." A particularly good chapter draws widely on scholarship concerning ancient families to create plausible pictures of the family and household environments of the earliest Christians (or "Christ-believers," as the book insists). Two further chapters explore, in one case, slavery in its broader Roman and narrower Christian context, and, in another case, social attitudes in the early Roman imperial world. It is interesting, if unsurprising, to see how the writers of the New Testament shared the values of the world in which they lived and learned.

Virginia Burrus sketches the project of volume two this way: "emphasis on *diversity* rather than sameness, on the local rather than the universal, and on practice rather than doctrine. Some may see this turn to a 'people's history of Christianity' as the secular study of a particular religion; others may experience it as the practice of a genuinely incarnational theology." Clearly, the volume had left-wing aspirations. Happily, the editor seems to have lost control of her team. What one finds here, for the most part, is a robust portrait of the complex, fascinating, messy world of late-antique Christianity. Almost without exception, the chapters in volume two are clearly and engagingly written, solidly grounded in the sources, and agreeably free of ideological cant.

All that Burrus' term "diversity" turns out to mean is that there really were vast differences in the practice and experience of the faith between about 200 and 600 from Mesopotamia to Britain. People spoke, wrote, and worshiped in a bewildering array of languages. Large-scale phenomena like martyrdom and asceticism were never specific to a place, to rich or poor, to men or women. This makes it a little hard to find the "people" who are the preoccupation of volume one, but it creates, in honest expositions, an enthralling story.

A fascinating chapter tells how children played and how their games were parts of a catechetical program. Studies of the architecture of baptisteries and of private chapels convey wonderful impressions of the kinds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of places where Christians gathered. Some chapters take us into houses, households, and families, private spheres, "conventicles," open to freedoms unavailable in public.

The social and religious meanings of food, and of abstention from various kinds of food, have interesting lessons to teach. There were heretics aplenty but their stories are more interesting and important than is sometimes assumed in straight-forward narratives. That is, heretics never saw themselves that way. They were right, they believed, and others had lost their way. It is true that heresiologists said awful, and sometimes untrue, things about them, but the constant friction between groups played a key role in permitting the eventual rise of strict orthodoxy.

An especially good chapter dealing with "Judaizers" and "Jewish Christians" (I could not quite figure out the difference) proves beyond a doubt that the traditional Christian and Jewish story of an early and definitive split between the two traditions is simply wrong and that relations between the two faiths were intimate for centuries. Several chapters, but one in particular, look at selected local settings to show how individual groups of Christians blended family traditions, local customs, and Christian practices. Sometimes these blends resulted in spiritual and ecclesial peduncles. Sometimes, however, they produced, say, Coptic Christianity.

One puts down the second volume of *A People's History of Christianity* with two clear impressions. The first is that the late-antique world is awash in sources: histories and chronicles, martyr's passions, saint's lives, conciliar canons, patristic writings, Roman law, and Christian art and architecture, to name only a few. In the hands of skilled interpreters, these materials can be made to tell an engrossing tale. The second is that once Christianity gained legal status in the Roman world and burst forth in all its profusion, it sometimes became hard to tell who was in charge, what was to be believed, and how to worship.

These two volumes are the first to appear of a projected six. The others will treat Byzantium, the medieval West, the Reformation, and the modern era. I fervently hope that the other volumes will be more like volume two than volume one.

I am nevertheless not quite sure about the audience for these books. They are, with a few exceptions, pretty well written. They are lightly annotated and each chapter concludes with suggestions for further reading that are almost always limited to recent works in English. All chapters have illustrations in rather muddy black-and-white reproductions, and each volume has a gallery of color plates. The chapters are studded with sidebars containing brief and well-chosen excerpts from primary sources.

All of this suggests to me that an academic audience is not the primary target. But I have a hard time imagining the people in the pews curling up with these books. Well-stocked parish libraries will probably want to buy them. All in all, they are better for browsing than for reading right through.

BRIEFLY NOTED

A SHORT HISTORY OF THOMISM
by ROMANUS CESSARIO
Catholic University, 106 pages, $19.95

There are Thomists, and then there are Thomists. Father Cessario, a Dominican teaching at St. John's Seminary in Boston, provides the useful service of sorting out the thousands of thinkers who since the fourteenth century have claimed to be disciples of the Angelic Doctor, and he does so in very short compass. The so-called transcendental Thomists, such as Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan, are definitely outside the circle of authentic Thomism. This book is a handy little guide for philosophers and philosophy majors.

THE MYTH OF ISLAMIC TOLERANCE: HOW ISLAMIC LAW TREATS NON-MUSLIMS
edited by ROBERT SPENCER
Prometheus, 594 pages, $26

This book might be described as an extended bill of indictment against Islam and a debunking of the still commonly heard claim that Islam has been and is tolerant of minorities. In addition to the editor, authors include Robert Wistrich, Daniel Pipes, and Bat Ye'or—the last the author of the recently published *Eurabia* and other books that have alerted the West to the reality of "dhimmitude," meaning the subservient place of Christians and Jews under Islamic rule. As a bill of indictment, it is subject to the complaint that it does not include everything that needs to be said on the subject, but what it does say is necessary and relentlessly grim reading.

BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL
by DANIEL J. MAHONEY
ISI, 216 pages, $15

Another volume in ISI's impressive Library of Modern Thinkers. It joins already published books on Robert Nisbet, Ludwig von Mises, Wilhelm Ropke, and Eric Voegelin. Still to come are studies of, among others, Christopher Dawson, Christopher Lasch, John Courtney Murray, Michael Oakeshott, and Michael Polanyi. Daniel Mahoney of Assumption College has done a brilliant job of bringing to life the "conservative liberalism" of Jouvenel, the French philosopher and journalist who died in 1987. Especially valuable is the discussion of the idea of sovereignty in political life, and of the limits and possibilities of politics itself. This is political philosophy of a high order, very readably presented.

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The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Dechristianizing America

If you're not a Christian and not about to become a Christian, but you're a public intellectual who is paid to be an expert on a society that is overwhelmingly Christian, you have to make a decision about how to position yourself. For a long time, beginning in the first half of the last century and accelerating in the aftermath of World War II, many thinkers simply decided to ignore "the religion factor" in American life. The dogma was promulgated, and reiterated in textbooks from grade school through graduate school, that religion was once important but now America is a comprehensively and irreversibly secular society. Historian David Hollinger of Berkeley has written with admirable candor about the decision of the American intellectual class to emulate the more thorough secularism of European thinkers. This decision was strengthened, he says, by the influence of émigré Jewish intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s. Hollinger, one notes, strongly approves of the turn toward European secularism.

Over more than twenty years, that way of positioning oneself with respect to American culture became increasingly untenable, as religion of the unmistakably Christian kind began breaking out all over the public square. As a result, some non-Christian thinkers, and Jewish thinkers in particular, began to take a different tack. Since religion could no longer be ignored, one had to assume a posture toward it. In recent years, different postures have been assumed. (Not all the figures I will mention here would be recognized as public intellectuals, but they represent nodal points around which public attitudes and commentaries cluster.)

Some, such as Abe Foxman of the ADL, decided that the resurgence of religion in public poses a lethal threat to all they cherish about America, and to Jews in particular. Joining forces with older proponents of a rigid secularism, they rail against the dangers of the "religious right." Foxman, like the very influential Leo Pfeffer of the American Jewish Congress before him, is personally observant. The insistence is that personally religious means privately religious.

Others, such as Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine, recognize that religion in public is here to stay and therefore try to spin the phenomenon in the service of their "progressive" ideology. Lerner and a few others are the leftist Jewish counterparts to Jim Wallis (author of *God's Politics*) in evangelical Protestantism.

A more thoughtful response to the religious resurgence was for decades represented by Irving Kristol's magazine, the *Public Interest*. Kristol—and his mainly but by no means exclusively Jewish colleagues—took a generally benign view of the assertiveness of a new mix of religion, culture, and politics that challenged regnant secular liberalisms. Kristol's understanding of religion in public was usually described as "instrumental": It doesn't much care about the particularities of Christian beliefs; the assertiveness of Christian morality is socially and politically useful.

A more explicit alliance between Judaism and public Christianity is pressed by the likes of Rabbi David Lapin and his movement, Toward Tradition. Writers

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such as Michael Medved, Don Feder, Dennis Prager, and David Klinghoffer adopt a similar posture. Such figures are not intimidated by the charge that they are the Jewish wing of the "religious right."

Then there are Rabbi David Novak and the hundreds of Jewish signers of the 2000 statement *Dabru Emet* ("To Speak the Truth"). Although Novak and others are generally on the "conservative" side of contested social and moral issues, their chief concern is the religious and moral engagement between Judaism and Christianity. This is presently the most vibrant expression of the long-standing Jewish-Christian dialogue. It is attentive also to grounding the search for a more just and free society in shared Jewish and Christian warrants. It is understood that, while there is not a shared Judeo-Christian religion, there is a shared Judeo-Christian ethic. In the long and troubled history of Jewish-Christian relations, this is the enterprise that goes most deeply and could, I believe, have the most lasting consequences.

Yet others take another approach to the problem of being public intellectuals who are expected to be experts on an assertively religious society in which they are, religiously speaking, in a small minority. One thinks, for instance, of such figures as Alan Wolfe, David Brooks, Harold Bloom, Stanley Fish, and Adam Kirsch. These people are very different. Brooks is a frequently brilliant observer of cultural manners and quirks, and Fish is an energetic philosophical provocateur who would be sorely missed. What this group has in common, and what distinguishes them from other thinkers, is that they have taken it on themselves to adjudicate what is real and what is only apparent in the Christianity professed by the great majority of their fellow citizens. This might be described as a particularly bold exercise in *chutzpah*, but it is not without its charms.

Here, for example, is a review by Adam Kirsch of *Washington's God* by Michael and Jana Novak. Kirsch does not like the book at all. "It is not a serious work of history. It falls rather in the Parson Weems tradition of Washington biography, using the father of the country as a blank screen on which to project desires and fantasies about the country he fathered." Kirsch is determined not to let the father of the country, which is Kirsch's country, too, be claimed by the Christians. Now, as it happens, I think *Washington's God* would be a stronger book if it focused less on the personal piety and beliefs of Washington and more on the structure of Christian (and Jewish!) thought that marked the American Founders, including Washington. That structure is nicely analyzed in Michael Novak's earlier book *On Two Wings*.

More pertinent to this discussion, however, is Kirsch's confident assertion about the kind of religion that can be safely admitted to the public square. It is "a vision of faith that does seem genuinely American: pragmatic, experiential, internal, more interested in love and forgiveness than judgment and punishment. More of this kind of faith, at least, can't hurt the republic." A safely neutered Christianity whose hard edges have been replaced by the warm and fuzzy may be, according to Kirsch, admitted, if somewhat grudgingly, to the telling of the American story.

The most audacious effort to acknowledge "Christian America" while, at the same time, redefining it in a way that raises no awkward questions, and especially no awkward questions for those who are not Christian, is represented by sociologist Alan Wolfe of Boston College. In FIRST THINGS, I have regularly attended to his writings of recent years in which he assures his readers that Christians do not really believe what they say they believe. Wolfe, who says he does not have a religious bone in his body, set out his oft-reiterated thesis in the 1999 book *One Nation, After All: What Americans Really Think About God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left and Each Other.* Using interviews conducted by his assistants, Wolfe concludes that, except for their views on homosexuality, Americans are, despite their claims to be Christian, more or less good liberals like the rest of us. As for conservative Christians and the much-touted "religious right," they hardly show up on his radar screen. As with other "extremists," they are marginal, and must be kept that way.

In the days before religion began breaking out all over, the "religion factor"—meaning the Christian factor—was treated as epiphenomenal. Harold Bloom has an even more ambitious argument in his 1993 book, *American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation.* There we are instructed that Americans, with exceptions, have left Christianity behind in order to join Bloom in embracing an Emersonian gnosticism centered in the actualization of the "divine spark" within each of us.

In these instances, we have non-Christians negotiating their place in a dominantly Christian society and their standing as experts on that society—more specifically as experts on religion in that society—who contend that 85 percent of the population is living in a state of false consciousness by thinking that they are, in some way that really matters, Christian. It is passing strange.

This attempted de-Christianization of America is not very polite. These writers, in effect, are asserting that Christians in America are the Laodiceans to whom

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the Lord says in Revelation 3, "I know your works; you are neither hot nor cold. Would that you were hot or cold. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth." Admittedly, with Bloom there is the interesting twist that they are not, in fact, lukewarm but hot for Emersonian gnosticism, albeit with some vestigial Christian trimmings.

It is undoubtedly true that many Christians are mediocre in their faith and its practice. Ordinarily, most people are ordinary. And there is surely a strong streak of gnosticism in popular spiritualities. More striking, however, is the claim that people are not what they say they are; that the majority of Christians who say that being Christian is very important to their lives are simply deceiving themselves. Among social analysts, there is no other social indicator or identity claim that is so cavalierly dismissed or redefined in ways contrary to what people say about themselves. If someone says he is a liberal Democrat or a fervent Red Sox fan, he is thought to have said something significant about himself. If he says he is very seriously a Christian, Messrs. Wolfe, Bloom, et al., are eager to disillusion him, or at least to explain to the rest of us why he is deluded.

Stanley Fish's distinctive contribution is to argue that American Christians are not seriously Christian because Christianity is a "comprehensive account" of reality and comprehensive accounts of reality are of necessity fanatical. Since Christians in America are generally not fanatical but tolerant and quite nice, it follows that they are actually good liberals who do not really believe in the comprehensive account that is Christianity. If one accepts the premise, this has the charm of being logical.

Fifty years ago, Will Herberg published his justly influential *Protestant-Catholic-Jew.* In those days, the old Protestant oldline establishment was still very much in place, as was what was viewed as tribally intact Catholicism. Herberg insightfully traced the ways in which Jews and Catholics were successfully melding their religious identity with the American Way of Life as defined by the old establishment. A crucial part of this was the adjustment to an "unconscious secularization" that modified, but did not evacuate, religious particularities. Herberg himself was very seriously a Jew.

In American culture, politics, and religion, a great deal has happened in the past half-century. The decline of the oldline Protestant establishment, and the energy with which Catholics and evangelical Protestants are prepared to challenge dominant patterns of thought and life, are among the most obvious changes. The consensus about the American Way of Life that Herberg assumed has largely collapsed. Driving these changes has been the divide over abortion and related questions inescapably engaging morality and public policy. Yet all this seems to have bypassed some of the thinkers under discussion here. In 1961, sociologist Gerhard Lenski made the case in *The Religious Factor* that religion is a distinct phenomenon, not an epiphenomenon, in the ordering of public life. All these years later, and we still have public intellectuals working hard to deny that.

The de-Christianizing of America by definitional legerdemain sometimes assumes amusing proportions. I have previously discussed Andrew Heinze's recent book, *Jews and the American Soul* (FIRST THINGS, February). His lavishly documented thesis is that, beginning in the early twentieth century, a handful of Jewish psychiatrists and pop psychologists succeeded in transforming the ways in which most Americans understand themselves and what they believe. It is a provocative argument and there is something to it. At the same time, one may be permitted to observe that the suggestion that American Christianity is now under the magisterium of Jewish psychotherapy warrants a measure of skepticism.

Thinkers and pundits of all varieties are today paying much more attention to religion than was the case fifty or even twenty years ago. Almost nobody today claims that religion is in the process of withering away. What is being said by some who are uncertain of their place in a pervasively and confusedly Christian society is that the resurgence of religion in public is nothing to worry about. It is nothing to worry about because it is not distinctively Christian and therefore is not threatening to non-Christians. In the case of Jewish thinkers, this view reflects a longstanding assumption that the less Christian a society is the better it is for Jews. That assumption had some warrant in the European experience, although one does not forget that the regime that perpetrated the Holocaust was virulently anti-Christian.

Also in this respect, America is something quite new in world history. There is here a context of security and mutual trust that makes possible a genuine encounter between Jews and Christians, and between Judaism and Christianity. This is the encounter called for in the *Dabru Emet* statement and other initiatives. Almost all Christians, and some Jews, are convinced that America is good for Jews not despite but because it is a Christian society. The mutually respectful encounter between Judaism and Christianity that is called for is a unique opportunity in two thousand years of history. That opportunity will continue to be squandered if we allow ourselves to be persuaded that

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religion in America is merely an epiphenomenal muddle of congenially liberal dispositions passing as Christianity. Except, of course, for the members of the "religious right," who really are Christianly serious and therefore really are dangerous. (Some critics now call them the "Christianists," distinguishing them from the safe Christians.)

Once again, America is, as it always has been, an incorrigibly, confusedly, and conflictedly Christian society. There are relatively small minorities of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Of these, only Jews play a large role in our public discourse, although that could change in the future. More important, of these only Jews have an intrinsic religious relationship with Christians. Christianity can be understood apart from Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism; it cannot be understood apart from Judaism.

Jewish thinkers who are determined to denature Christianity often do so because they view Christianity as a threat. Perhaps just as often, they do so because they are as alienated from Judaism as they are fearful of Christianity, or even more so. These factors converge in complicated ways. If they have given up religious particularity in order to be part of the homogeneous American "we," they expect others to accommodate them by giving up their own religious particularity and resent it when they don't. Or else, as in the instance of Alan Wolfe et al., they convince themselves that others have accommodated them when they haven't.

Will Herberg was right. Protestants, Catholics, and Jews were finding a shared world in the American Way of Life. He recognized the possibility that religious particularity would be sacrificed to the pseudo-religion of Americanism. Critical to his argument was the belief that the American Way assumed and required a vibrant identity as Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. This is the authentic pluralism in which difference makes a difference; in which, somewhat paradoxically, difference and habits of living with difference without denying that difference conduce to the distinctive form of unity that is the American Way.

Much has changed in the past half century. Protestantism in the form of the mainline-oldline Protestantism that Herberg had in mind has precipitously declined in numbers, influence, and confidence. The return of evangelical Protestantism from its fundamentalist exile was not in his line of vision. Moreover, the tribally intact Catholicism that he thought he knew gave way to the fissiparous dynamics triggered by the Second Vatican Council. Decades later, the more self-consciously orthodox sectors of Protestantism and Catholicism are converging in a new and more confident cultural assertiveness. There is every reason to believe that these are very long-term trends in American life.

The question inevitably arises: Where does this leave Jews and Judaism? And where does it leave Jews who are alienated from Judaism? In many cases, the latter make common cultural cause with Protestants who are alienated from the oldline Protestantism that Herberg took for granted. The upshot is that there is no longer the secure religio-cultural triumvirate of Protestant-Catholic-Jew. There is a large and more secularized sector of happen-to-be Protestants, happen-to-be Jews, and happen-to-be Catholics. These are the people who say they are Protestant, Jewish, or Catholic "by background." Together, and quite suddenly it seems, they are faced by, and made uneasy or hysterical by, a combination of more orthodox Christians who are newly assertive about moral truths that they believe should inform the ordering of our common life.

It is all very unsettling. And not least for Jewish intellectuals who make their living as experts on explaining America to their fellow Americans. The situation is not made easier by the fact that Jews are, as a proportion of the population, a much smaller minority than they were in Herberg's day. It is understandable that some of these intellectuals resort to the ploy of definitionally de-Christianizing America. "I am only in a small minority," they can tell themselves, "if you assume that the majority is Christian, which it really is not." The ploy is understandable. It is also poignant. More important, it is a great disservice.

It is a great disservice in that it gravely distorts the effort to understand the maddening changes and confusions that are the permanent state of American society. In a larger context that should matter to us immeasurably more, it is a great disservice to a unique moment of opportunity and obligation in which Christians and Jews, precisely *as* Christians and Jews, can respectfully engage one another in discerning the providential guidance of the God of Israel, and also in the right ordering of our life together.

FT

THE DEATH OF WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN JR.

Bill Coffin has died at age eighty-one. It was front-page news, and deservedly so. As much as or more than any religious figure, Bill represented the turning of the mainline-oldline establishment toward "prophetic" activism and against the Brahmin hegemony to which

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it had historically been chaplain. To the end, Bill was not comfortable in the circles of radical anti-Americanism by which he was lionized. He always, and I believe sincerely, insisted that his was a "lover's quarrel" with America. He understood himself to be a patriot, and his protest was, he said, the "higher patriotism." It is the way many of us spoke at the time. Bill was a dear friend. There was a sharp parting of the ways and years of silence, but I am grateful for our friendly correspondence in the months before his death.

Bill Coffin has to have a major part in any history of American religion, culture, and public life from the late 1950s through the 1980s. As chaplain of Yale, he was among the Freedom Riders in the early efforts to desegregate the South. I came to know him well when, in the mid-1960s, Father Daniel Berrigan, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and I had established what came to be known as Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam (CALCAV), and we invited Bill to speak at one of our early meetings in New York. In the years following, Bill was probably the most prominent religious protestor against the Vietnam War, at least until Martin Luther King Jr. joined the campaign at a CALCAV-sponsored event at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, exactly one year before he was assassinated.

I now find it exhausting to remember the torrent of meetings, demonstrations, manifestos, and arguments during the halcyon days of what then was simply called "The Movement." But there were also a lot of good times just hanging out. I recall with particular fondness Bill's visits to St. John the Evangelist, the very poor and very black parish I pastored in Brooklyn. We had in the rectory a rickety old square grand piano, and Bill was a fine pianist and a powerful baritone. He had once aspired to a career as a concert artist. One night, with the help of good whisky and cigars, we went through all the golden oldies of *The Lutheran Hymnal* until the early hours. I can hear now the virile seventeenth-century Norwegian hymn "Behold, a Host Arrayed in White" with multiple musical improvisations by Bill. He was great company.

Bill was what used to be called a manly man before that phrase fell into disfavor. I see that one obituary deplores the fact that Bill was initially unsupportive of the gay-rights movement but then, as it is nicely put, "he finally came around." The Left is notoriously intolerant of deviations, including deviations on deviancy. Three marriages and much tumult notwithstanding, Bill adamantly declared that he was always a moral traditionalist, as he was always a patriot. At least in the realm of intentionality, he was both.

Coffins went back to the Mayflower, some of them commanding the great pulpits of early America. His uncle, Henry Sloane Coffin, was president of Union Theological Seminary and was influential in Bill's becoming a Presbyterian minister. The places of power and privilege came naturally to Bill. A few years with the Central Intelligence Agency, then chaplaincies at Andover, Williams, and Yale, followed by a troubled term as pastor of Riverside Church, the huge gothic monument that John D. Rockefeller had built for Harry Emerson Fosdick, the prince of Protestant liberalism in his time. When he had to be absent, Bill would ask me to fill in for him at Yale, which I was glad to do, although I knew that I or anyone else was viewed as a poor substitute for the pulpit master. Bill's style was very different: tough, humorous, sardonic, and marked by memorable one-liners. He cultivated a posture of prophetic defiance made possible by the security of privilege.

Coffin thrived on the constancy of crisis, and there were meetings without end on matters thought to be of national import. I recall a summer evening when Rabbi Balfour Brickner of Stephen Wise Reform Synagogue in New York and I were walking through the hallowed precincts of Yale and Balfour remarked that a generation earlier we—a Jew and Missouri Synod Lutheran from nondescript backgrounds—would not have been at home in such councils. "It's a change for the better," he said, "but sometimes I wonder if the WASPS are just weary of running things."

I, too, sometimes wondered that. It is hard to remember now the ways of the old establishments, before their institutions came under assault from what we loosely call the sixties. In those days, for instance, the National Council of Churches was a national pillar comparable to, say, the American Medical Association. We, the young radicals, were on fire with anti-establishment rhetoric, and I was rather taken aback when the establishment evidenced such eagerness to be part of the movement against itself. As in the universities, there was a great fear of being out of step with the young and their putative revolution. Eugene Carson Blake of the National Council of Churches, featured on the cover of *Time* as "Mr. Protestant," and John Bennett, president of Union Seminary, and so many others happily signed up with "The Movement," and I wondered what was going to happen to the institutions that they headed—the institutions that I had thought were running the world. Now we know.

None of the obituaries I saw mentioned Bill Coffin's part in the 1975 Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation. That was a project that Peter Berger—then at Rutgers, now at Boston University—and I initiated in order to counter the then fashionable "secular Christianity" and "death of God" thinkers. As Bill always insisted that he was a patriot, so also he was

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uneasy with the casual jettisoning of Christian orthodoxy by so many of the brightest and best of the time. He was at heart, he assured me on many occasions, a Calvinist, convinced of human depravity and the indispensability of the blood-bought atonement of the cross, along with the hope of glory. (To the consternation of many allies, he was also not a pacifist.) Bill, it must be admitted, was neither a theologian nor an intellectual, but he readily accepted my invitation to be part of the Hartford project.

It was an impressive group that hammered out the appeal in several days of intense discussion in Connecticut. The final signatories included Fr. Avery Dulles, George Forell, Stanley Hauerwas, Fr. Thomas Hopko, George Lindbeck, Ralph McInerny, Kilmer Myers, then Episcopal bishop of California, Richard Mouw, Fr. Carl Peter, Fr. Alexander Schmemann, Fr. Gerard Sloyan, Lewis Smedes, Fr. George Tavard, and Robert Louis Wilken.

The Hartford Appeal caused quite a stir at the time. Berger and I edited the book *Against the World for the World: The Hartford Appeal and the Future of American Religion*. (I see that *Amazon.com* says it has new and used copies from $3.75. I can't imagine it is still in print.) The book contains the appeal and eight explanatory essays by participants. "The renewal of Christian witness and mission," the appeal began, "requires constant examination of the assumptions shaping the Church's life. Today an apparent loss of the sense of the transcendent is undermining the Church's ability to address with clarity and courage the urgent tasks to which God calls it in the world. This loss is manifest in a number of pervasive themes. Many are superficially attractive, but upon closer examination we find these themes false and debilitating to the Church's life and work." The signers then set out thirteen pervasive, false, and debilitating themes, following each with a statement of the truth that it undermines.

That was thirty-one years ago, and I recognize that it is just possible that some readers are not familiar with the Hartford Appeal. So here are the themes. How many, do you suppose, are not relevant to our current religious situation?

(1) Modern thought is superior to all past forms of understanding reality, and is therefore normative for Christian faith and life.

(2) Religious statements are totally independent of reasonable discourse.

(3) Religious language refers to human experience and nothing else, God being humanity's noblest creation.

(4) Jesus can be understood only in terms of contemporary models of humanity.

(5) All religions are equally valid; the choice among them is not a matter of conviction about truth but only of personal preference or lifestyle.

(6) To realize one's potential and to be true to oneself is the whole meaning of salvation.

(7) Since what is human is good, evil can adequately be understood as failure to realize human potential.

(8) The sole purpose of worship is to promote individual self-realization and human community.

(9) Institutions and historical traditions are oppressive and inimical to our being truly human; liberation from them is required for authentic existence and authentic religion.

(10) The world must set the agenda for the Church. Social, political, and economic programs to improve the quality of life are ultimately normative for the Church's mission in the world.

(11) An emphasis on God's transcendence is at least a hindrance to, and perhaps incompatible with, Christian social concern and action.

(12) The struggle for a better humanity will bring about the kingdom of God.

(13) The question of hope beyond death is irrelevant or at best marginal to the Christian understanding of human fulfillment.

As I say, the Hartford Appeal caused a ruckus in oldline Protestant and some Catholic circles, and was widely discussed in the general media. At least Schmemann and Hopko believed the themes were pertinent also to developments in Orthodoxy. Those attacking the appeal claimed their positions were caricatured, and it is true that we provocatively stated the themes in an unvarnished form. Protests to the contrary, they were themes explicit and implicit in much Christian thought of the time, and they are still with us today.

Soon there was a flurry of counter-appeals, notably one by a group of Boston-area theologians, led by Harvey Cox of *Secular City* fame. In our discussions after the Hartford meeting, Bill Coffin indicated to me his nervousness about the reaction to the appeal's strictures with respect to social activism. In *Against the World for the World*, my essay was titled "Calling a Halt to Retreat: Hartford and Social Justice." Bill said he agreed with the call for a more theologically grounded understanding of social justice, but he was under strong pressure from others to choose between Hartford and those who understood themselves to be the objects of Hartford's criticism. He knew, too, that by that time my credentials with the Left were hardly in order, and Bill was, for all his idiosyncrasies, a man of the Left.

Shortly after the appearance of the appeal, the National Council of Churches sponsored a debate

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about it up at the "Godbox," 475 Riverside Drive. Bill and I were on one side, with Harvey Cox and, if memory serves, James Armstrong, a United Methodist bishop, on the other. Not surprisingly, my friends thought the argument of the appeal had clearly prevailed, despite the fact that, halfway into the discussion, Bill joined the other side in criticizing Hartford.

Of course, I was disappointed, but we remained friends, for a time. By then I had already distanced myself from "The Movement," notably over abortion and other countercultural liberationisms, while Bill still had years of leadership in the nuclear-freeze cause and sundry other agitations about which he and I strongly disagreed. I suppose, looking back, that the friendship effectively ended that day at 475 Riverside. We saw each other from time to time after that, but it was not the same.

You've been very patient in reading these ramblings. But again, the story of Bill Coffin is in significant part the story of a once dominant sector of religion in the public square. In 2004, I reviewed a biography of Bill in these pages. I wrote then: "While Coffin is obviously a hero—indeed a moral and political prophet—to his biographer, the poignant story told here is one of an increasingly disoriented and marginal figure whose great privilege and talent spiral downward into a life and a mission in shambles. . . . Coffin has now found, Goldstein suggests, a measure of wisdom, even of tranquility. He employs a musical trope: 'As he grows older, Coffin masters less and less; his God plays him more and more.' *William Sloane Coffin, Jr.: A Holy Impatience* is very much worth reading to recall the excitements and certitudes of a now debilitated liberal Protestant establishment as that establishment was exemplified in a gifted leader whose like we will almost certainly never see again. Bill Coffin was the last blaze of a religious and cultural world now extinct."

That's about right, I think. Maybe I should have said all but extinct. But I'll stand by what I wrote, only adding that I loved him like a brother, and pray that choirs of angels welcome him on the far side of Jordan.

FT

Bonhoeffer Today

We have been listening to Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the centenary of his birth in 1906. Bonhoeffer's time in America, shortly before the start of World War II, left him with a deep ambivalence about the connection between religion and democracy here. On the one hand, religion checked the ambitions of the state; on the other, Americans of the "free church" traditions (Bonhoeffer always calls them spiritualists or enthusiasts) were always prone to conflating the role of the Church and that of the state. He wrote in his *Ethics*:

> At this point some thought must be given to the special development in the Anglo-Saxon countries and particularly in America. The American Revolution was almost contemporary with the French one, and politically the two were not unconnected; yet they were profoundly different in character. The American democracy is not founded upon the emancipated man but, quite on the contrary, upon the kingdom of God and the limitation of all earthly powers by the sovereignty of God. It is indeed significant when, in contrast to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, American historians can say that the federal constitution was written by men who were conscious of original sin and of the wickedness of the human heart. Earthly wielders of authority, and also the people, are directed into their proper bounds, in due consideration of man's innate longing for power and of the fact that power pertains only to God. With these ideas, which derive from Calvinism, there is combined the essentially contrary idea which comes from the spiritualism of the Dissenters who took refuge in America, the idea that the kingdom of God on earth cannot be built by the authority of the state but only by the congregation of the faithful. The Church proclaims the principles of the social and political order, and the state makes available the technical means for putting them into effect. These two quite alien lines of thought converge in the demand for democracy, and it is enthusiastic spiritualism that becomes the determining factor in American thought. This explains the remarkable fact that on the European continent it has never been possible to find a Christian basis for democracy, while in the Anglo-Saxon countries democracy and democracy alone is regarded as the Christian form of the state. The persecution and expulsion of the spiritualists from the Continent has in this respect been fraught with the most far-reaching political consequences. If in spite of this the Anglo-Saxon countries, too, are suffering from severe symptoms of secularization, the cause does not lie in the misinterpretation of the distinction between the two offices or kingdoms, but rather in the reverse of this, in the failure of the enthusiasts to distinguish at all between the office or kingdom of the state and the office or kingdom of the Church. The claim of the congregation of the faithful to build the world with Christian principles ends only with the total capitulation of the Church to the world, as can be seen clearly enough by a glance at the New York church registers. If this does

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not involve a radical hostility to the Church, that is only because no real distinction has ever been drawn here between the offices of Church and state. Godlessness remains more covert. And indeed in this way it deprives the Church even of the blessing of suffering and of the possible rebirth which suffering may engender.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Here at the magazine, a regular scanning of *Publishers Weekly* is a must. It offers brief anonymous reviews of forthcoming books. Some of the reviewers are more than competent, while others are, well, judge for yourself. *A Life in Secrets* is about Vera Atkins, a high-ranking British intelligence officer who during World War II "sent 400 agents into France, including 39 women." The author, we are told, "has produced a memorable portrait of a woman who knowingly sent other women to their deaths and a searing history of female courage and suffering during WWII." Apparently the 361 men were cowards who managed to make a good time of it. One is reminded of the mythical but all too believable *New York Times* headline: "Washington Destroyed by Bomb: Women and Minorities Hit Hardest." The same issue of *Publishers Weekly* reviews *Unplugged* by William Colby, a euthanasia advocate. The reviewer says he discusses the Terri Schiavo case and "reminds us that the right to die is a new subject because the technology that allows us to keep patients alive is recent." Thank God for the technological breakthroughs that brought us food and water. And in the same issue, if you will believe it, we have *The Reluctant Mr. Darwin*, which details Darwin's procrastinating habits "and then focuses on how he gained enough confidence and evidence to publish a book that would displace humankind from its privileged position as a special creation." And now all the animals are publishing and reviewing books.

■ Karen Armstrong was for seven years (from 1962 to 1969) a sister of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. She later wrote a book of the escape-from-the-convent genre and in 1993 hit it big with *A History of God*. Now she has a fat tome titled *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions* (Knopf). It focuses on the so-called Axial Age, from 900 B.C. to 200 B.C., which produced Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and the philosophy of Greece. William Grimes reviews the new book in the *New York Times* and is not taken with the bloviating generalizations. "The Sophists taught systematic doubt at a time of deepening anxiety," Armstrong writes. That period was an "age of transition." I am reminded of that old *New Yorker* cartoon: As they are being driven from the Garden of Eden, Adam turns to Eve and says, "My dear, we are living in an age of transition." In her discussion of karma, Armstrong says, "As this new concept took hold, the mood of India changed and many became depressed." As will many readers. As she looks back on the Axial Age, Armstrong draws the lesson for the modern world that we should embrace the Axial ideals of "sympathy, respect and universal concern." Grimes writes: "All right, fine. But these sentiments, however lofty, seem squishy. . . . After an inspirational journey through more than two millennia of profound thought, struggle, and enlightenment, the reader gets a fortune cookie at the end." Ouch. Armstrong described her beliefs in a C-Span interview in 2000: "I usually describe myself, perhaps flippantly, as a freelance monotheist. I draw sustenance from all three of the faiths of Abraham. I can't see any one of them as having the monopoly of truth, any one of them as superior to any of the others. Each has its own particular genius and each its own particular pitfalls and Achilles' heels. But recently, I've just written a short life of the Buddha, and I've been enthralled by what he has to say about spirituality, about the ultimate, about compassion, and about the necessary loss of ego before you can encounter the divine. And all the great traditions are, in my view, saying the same thing in much the same way, despite their surface differences." I am religiously everything, and therefore I am religiously nothing. In her poignant testimony, one hears the voice of Harold Bloom's Emersonian gnosticism. And perhaps the echoes of a young woman of four decades ago seeking a spirituality in service of the self and deciding to become a Catholic nun, before moving on.

■ In October 1978, shortly after he was elected pope, John Paul II responded to a shouted question from a reporter who asked when he would visit Poland. The pope said he would visit Poland soon. Knowledgeable Vatican observers were astonished. It was the first time in modern history that a pope had answered an impromptu question in public. Benedict XVI is doing a genuinely new thing that has received too little attention. On a number of occasions with priests, laypeople, and children, he has taken questions and responded with extended on-the-record responses. I suppose that previous popes and their advisors thought such a practice might dilute the attention paid their relatively rare

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and solemn pronouncements. Benedict clearly does not think that. In truth, the simplicity and clarity of his spontaneous responses illumine more-formal messages. For instance, meeting on April 6 with young people preparing for World Youth Day, he was asked about creation and Intelligent Design. His response is a very helpful addendum to his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*. Here it is:

> The great Galileo said that God wrote the book of nature in the form of mathematical language. He was convinced that God gave us two books: that of Sacred Scripture, and that of nature. And the language of nature—this was his conviction—is mathematics, which is therefore a language of God, of the Creator.
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> Let us reflect now on what mathematics is. In itself it is an abstract system, an invention of the human spirit, and as such in its purity it does not really exist. It is always realized approximately, but—as such—it is an intellectual system, a great, brilliant invention of the human spirit. The surprising thing is that this invention of our human mind is truly the key for understanding nature, that nature is really structured in a mathematical way, and that our mathematics, which our spirit invented, really is the instrument for being able to work with nature, to put it at our service through technology.
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> It seems an almost incredible thing to me that an invention of the human intellect and the structure of the universe coincide: The mathematics we invented really gives us access to the nature of the universe and permits us to use it. . . . I think that this intersection between what we have thought up and how nature unfolds and behaves is an enigma and a great challenge, because we see that, in the end, there is one logic that links these two: our reason could not discover the other if there were not an identical logic at the source of both.
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> In this sense, it seems to me that mathematics—in which God as such does not appear—shows us the intelligent structure of the universe. Now there are also theories of chaos, but these are limited, because if chaos had the upper hand, all technology would become impossible. Technology is trustworthy only because our mathematics is trustworthy. Our science, which ultimately makes it possible to work with the energies of nature, presupposes the trustworthy, intelligent structure of matter, . . . the "design" of creation.
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> To come to the definitive question, I would say: Either God exists or he doesn't. There are only two options. Either one recognizes the priority of reason, of the creative Reason that stands at the beginning of everything and is the origin of everything—the priority of reason is also the priority of freedom—or one upholds the priority of the irrational, according to which everything in our world and in our lives is only an accident, marginal, an irrational product, and even reason would be a product of irrationality. In the end, one cannot 'prove' either of these views, but Christianity's great choice is the choice of reason and the priority of reason. This seems like an excellent choice to me, demonstrating how a great Intelligence, to which we can entrust ourselves, stands behind everything.
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> But to me, it seems that the real problem for the faith today is the evil in the world: One asks oneself how this is compatible with this rationality of the Creator. And here we really need that God who became flesh and who shows us how he is not only a mathematical logic, but that this primordial reason is also love. If we look at the great options, the Christian option is the more rational and human one even today. For this reason, we can confidently elaborate a philosophy, a vision of the world that is based on this priority of reason, on this trust that the creative Reason is love, and that this love is God.

■ Many were cheered when Father John Jenkins was appointed president of the University of Notre Dame. I have written in these pages on the recent and encouraging signs that Notre Dame was being renewed in a vibrant sense of its identity and mission as a Catholic university. In January, Fr. Jenkins took up the question of the performance of *The Vagina Monologues* and the sponsorship of a Queer Film Festival as an occasion to address what it means to be a Catholic university. In that statement, he asked many of the right questions and lifted the hopes of those who believe that clear Catholic commitment is the key to Notre Dame's greatness as a university. Then, in April, after extensive consultation with faculty, students, and other interested parties, Fr. Jenkins issued his decision. *The Vagina Monologues* and the film festival would continue. This was met with cries of disappointment and outrage from those whose hopes had been lifted. My initial response was to urge calm. While he had made the wrong decision about a potty-mouthed play and a specific promotion of the homosexual cause, I wrote, this does not necessarily define his leadership of Notre Dame. While one does not want to abandon hope, I am afraid I was wrong. Fr. Jenkins himself made the controversy over these two issues a litmus test in defining his understanding of what it means to be a Catholic university. After discussion with friends of Fr. Jenkins, some of them on the faculty of Notre Dame, and after reading the open letters of protest issued by Fr. Bill

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Miscamble and Fr. John Coughlin, the one an esteemed professor of history and the other an esteemed professor of law at Notre Dame, I find it difficult not to conclude that Fr. Jenkins has betrayed those who want Notre Dame to be unapologetically Catholic. In an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor*, Jenkins is on the defensive and can do no more than offer the assurance that Notre Dame will try to "achieve balance, to achieve the kind of conversation that is fair, that's intellectually serious, that includes, when appropriate, the Catholic perspective." A university that includes, when deemed appropriate, the Catholic perspective is something less than a Catholic university. Almost any university might make the same claim. The suggestion is that the Catholic perspective will have, as it is said, a place at the table. But it must stay in its place and have no illusions about being "privileged."

■ Most impressive is the open letter issued by John C. Cavadini, chairman of the department of theology at Notre Dame. He notes that there is "a missing conversation partner." "The statement of our president barely mentions the Church. . . . It is as though the mere mention of a relationship with the Church has become so alien to our ways of thinking and so offensive to our quest for a disembodied 'excellence' that it has become impolite to mention it at all." Cavadini refers to Pope John Paul II's document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, which underscored that the university is "from the heart of the Church." Cavidini writes: "*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* . . . speaks of a relationship not in the first place between the Catholic university and the Catholic intellectual tradition, but between the Catholic university and the Church. And, whether we recognize it or not, this relationship to the Church—to the real, incarnate Body of Christ, the Church as it is with all its blemishes and not the abstract, idealized Church in our minds—is the lifeblood and only guarantee of our identity as a Catholic university. There is no Catholic identity apart from affiliation with the Church." Fr. Jenkins repeatedly speaks of the Catholic intellectual tradition, which prompts Cavadini to observe, "The ancient Gnostic heresy developed an elitist intellectual tradition which eschewed connection to the 'fleshly' church of the bishop and devalued or spiritualized the sacraments. Are we in danger of developing a gnosticized version of the 'Catholic intellectual tradition,' one which floats free of any norming connection and so free of any concrete claim to Catholic identity? . . . Without a sense of the university's close relationship with, and accountability to, the Church, the unique and precious intellectual fabric that we have woven here and which many, including many who are not Catholic, have come to value precisely because of its special character and witness, can never in the long run be sustained." As I said, I have resisted the conclusion that Fr. Jenkins has set Notre Dame on the course of being no more than a nominally Catholic university. He has made it much more difficult, but we should all do our best to persist in resisting that conclusion. (I should add that a later and forceful statement by Bushop John D'Arcy, who has pastoral oversight of Notre Dame, reinforces the concerns expressed by Dr. Cavadini and others.)

■ Not everybody dumped on Stephen Walt of Harvard and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago when they published in the *London Review of Books* their essay "The Israel Lobby." The gist of the essay is that U.S. foreign policy, the media, and most American institutions of consequence are under the control of mainly Jewish organizations and are intimidated into toeing the line of uncritical support of the State of Israel, much to the detriment of America, the Middle East, and the world. Numerous critics charged Walt and Mearsheimer with reviving the myth of a vast Jewish conspiracy and encouraging, if not embracing, anti-Semitism. Tony Judt of New York University, on the other hand, came to the defense of Walt and Mearsheimer in a long op-ed in the *New York Times*. He ends up with this: "Thus it will not be self-evident to future generations of Americans why the imperial might and international reputation of the United States are so closely aligned with one small, controversial Mediterranean client state. It is already not at all self-evident to Europeans, Latin Americans, Africans or Asians. Why, they ask, has America chosen to lose touch with the rest of the international community on this issue? Americans may not like the implications of this question. But it is pressing. It bears directly on our international standing and influence; and it has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. We cannot ignore it." Mr. Judt is right that American support for Israel may not be self-evidently just to future generations, or even to many Americans today. All the more reason to explain that support more effectively. America has not "chosen to lose touch" with the international community that condemns Zionism as racism; America disagrees with that judgment. The animus of so many others toward Israel is not driven solely by anti-Semitism but it is certainly false to say that "it has nothing to do with anti-Semitism." Israel is not just "one small, controversial Mediterranean client state." Israel is the testing of the survival of the Jewish people. One may think that the establishment of Israel in 1948 was a mistake, and one may disagree with some or many of the policies of Israel, but support for Israel is inseparable from support for the Jewish people. Support for the Jewish people is a Christian moral imperative that is to be clearly

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distinguished from the enthusiasms of Christian Zionists and their apocalyptic scenarios for Israel's role in the End Time. Israel is surrounded by nations formally resolved on its extermination. Mr. Judt is right. In terms of Realpolitik calculations, America's commitment to Israel makes little sense, and those nations might be allowed to have their way. But the commitment of the American people—who are, not incidentally, overwhelmingly a Christian people—is, above all, a moral commitment grounded in a deep, albeit often confused, sense of the divinely forged bond between Christians and Jews. Mr. Judt and the Europeans whom he admires may view that as yet another eccentricity of those oddly religious Americans, and yet that bond, and not the sinister workings of the Israel lobby, is the key to understanding why America is steadfast, although not uncritical, in its defense of Israel against its declared enemies.

■ Discussion of the Israel lobby is largely verboten, critics of Israel complain, because anybody who raises serious questions is in danger of being dismissed as an anti-Semite. Entering right on cue to confirm what he intends to deny is Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League: "Mr. Judt's contention that 'fear' has caused a 'continued silence' on the subject in the Jewish community is just wrong. The Anti-Defamation League, for one, has called the Walt-Mearsheimer essay exactly what it is—shabby scholarship and a classical conspiratorial anti-Semitic analysis invoking the canards of Jewish power and Jewish control." Critics are intimidated by the fear of being called anti-Semites. QED. To be fair, ADL's routinized charge of anti-Semitism against anyone with whom it disagrees has by now lost much of its power to intimidate.

■ There is nonsense, and then there is nonsense on stilts. The second applies to numerous media commentaries upon the first anniversary of the pontificate, declaring that Pope Benedict has turned out to be a pussy cat—and a liberal-leaning pussy cat at that. As I mentioned in my reflection in the last issue on *Deus Caritas Est*, many depicted the encyclical as a warm and fuzzy Valentine's Day card without theological substance. Obviously, they had not read it carefully. Numerous commentaries cited my observation of some months ago that there was, also among some of his strongest admirers, a "palpable uneasiness" about some of the pope's early appointments. That is a fact, but it hardly warrants the headlines declaring, "Conservatives Disappointed with Pope!" The reality is that much of the media, along with self-designated progressive Catholics, had long depicted Joseph Ratzinger as Torquemada redivivus and dreaded his election as the onset of a new Inquisition. When in his first year he did not publicly whack anybody over the head with his crozier or send dissenting theologians to the Vatican dungeons, he was declared to be a changed man. He smiles! He talks nicely to children! He has Fr. Hans Küng in for dinner! It would be harder to admit that for years they had been defaming Joseph Ratzinger. The truth is that Joseph Ratzinger, now become Pope Benedict, is a man of extraordinary grace, intelligence, courage, and fidelity. Even were he not all that, he is Peter among us, the universal pastor of the Catholic Church. As my friend Rabbi Marc Gellman is fond of saying about media-generated excitements and counter-excitements: All the rest is Nielsen ratings.

■ There are a lot of good things that might be done with 2.4 million dollars. Or you might spend it on a study to see whether intercessory prayer "works." You possibly saw news reports on the findings of Dr. Herbert Benson of the Mind/Body Medical Center near Boston. He and his team conducted a "scientific study" in which one group of patients was told that strangers would pray for them, a second group was told that strangers might or might not pray for them, and a third group was not prayed for at all (at least not by the designated strangers). The conclusion of the study is that the prayer of strangers did not help in the recovery of patients. The Reverend Raymond Lawrence, an Episcopal hospital chaplain, writes in a *New York Times* op-ed piece that the finding "came as welcome news." Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and repentance are fine, he says, "while intercessions of the kind done in the Boston study—appeals to God to take some action—are of lesser importance. They represent a less respected magical wing of religion." He ends up with the admonition that theologians and scientists should not meddle in one another's business. I'm afraid Rev. Lawrence is as confused as Dr. Benson. What is termed respected or respectable notwithstanding, intercessory prayer that calls on God to act is among the cardinal practices of historic Christianity. It is a pity that Rev. Lawrence consigns everyone from Abraham to St. Paul to St. Thérèse to (quite possibly) his own parents to the "magical wing of religion." Among the many things wrongheaded about the Benson study is the presumption that we can put God to the test, measuring the ways in which He does and does not act. Then there is the question of the spiritual state of the strangers who did the praying. It is part of Christian belief that God is attentive to the prayer of the righteous. On these and other scores, the entire project was misbegotten and undeserving of serious attention. Rev. Lawrence writes: "The Lord's Prayer, the central prayer of Christendom, contains no plea for God to

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influence specific events in people's lives." Really? Forgiveness is an influence of life-or-death significance, and "trespasses" are painfully specific, while "daily bread" includes a multitude of specifics, including health of mind and body. God is love and wills good for all. A sinful world resists his benevolent purposes. The prayer of the righteous, including intercessory prayer, creates an opening in a sinful world for God's will to be done. How this happens is beyond our knowing; that this happens is an article of faith, sometimes reinforced by events we call miraculous. In their muddling of the meaning of prayer, Dr. Benson and Rev. Lawrence are equally culpable; the one for presuming to control, and the other for denying, a great mystery.

■ "The clergy are those particular people within the whole Church," C.S. Lewis writes in *Mere Christianity*, "who have been specially trained and set aside to look after what concerns us as creatures who are going to live forever: and we are asking them to do a quite different job for which they have not been trained [when we expect them to provide political leadership]. The job is really on us, on the laymen. The application of Christian principles, say, to trade unionism and education, must come from trade unionists and Christian schoolmasters; just as Christian literature comes from Christian novelists and dramatists—not from the bench of bishops getting together and trying to write plays and novels in their spare time." John O'Sullivan cites that in a *National Review* article critical of the Catholic bishops' campaign on behalf of liberal immigration laws. Along with the *Wall Street Journal*, which comes close to advocating the abolition of national borders, the bishops are the most prominent proponents of open immigration policies. I agree with the broad moral principles that the bishops say should guide our thinking on this matter, but O'Sullivan has a point when he criticizes what he views as the moral grandstanding of Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, who declares that he is prepared to engage in civil disobedience and go to jail rather than deny the sacraments or a cup of soup to an illegal immigrant. O'Sullivan writes: "The provisions that provoked Cardinal Mahony were aimed at organized gangs of people-smugglers (sometimes known as 'coyotes' or, in Asia, 'snakeheads') rather than at nuns and social workers. Nor were these aspects of the legislation very new. It has been against the law for decades for people to assist the smuggling and hiding of illegal aliens—and yet comparatively few cardinals have been dragged off to prison during this period. Maybe the cops, notoriously respectful of the cloth, have been turning a blind eye." Bishops and other religious leaders are, as Lewis puts it, particular people with particular responsibilities. Public policy expertise is not ordinarily something acquired in one's spare time. But, even if religious leaders do possess such expertise, it is not always evident why their being religious leaders should give a preferred status to their policy judgments. Of course, drawing the line between moral principle and policy prescription is a perennial problem, and most of us will sometimes get it wrong. Keeping in mind the above counsel of C.S. Lewis can contribute to getting it right more often than not.

■ Several years ago I noted the brouhaha in Germany, where a maverick doctor was collecting human cadavers and putting them on public display. What then shocked is becoming routinized. The dead bodies have been on display here for some months at the museum of the South Street Seaport, and the exhibit is apparently doing a fairly brisk business. Watch for the show coming to a city near you. The corpses are gussied up with a special plastic formula and posed in interesting ways. Some people suffering from excessive scrupulosity have raised questions about where the cadavers come from. China seems a likely source, and some of the skulls have suspicious marks that look like bullet holes, suggesting that they are the bodies of prisoners dispatched in Chinese fashion. Francis X. Clines in the *New York Times* did a mildly funny piece on the Seaport display in which he noted the odd posturing of the cadavers and suggested the whole thing should raise no serious questions because, after all, medical students do interesting things with human bodies in the lab. Elizabeth Marquardt wrote a letter to the editor saying that she was not amused. "In these labs, the norm is to treat the cadaver with dignity, which precludes selling tickets or posing it as if it were playing baseball. Imagined conversation: After leaving the exhibit, a boy asks his father, 'So, Dad, when Grandma dies can we pose her body as if she is, like, knitting?' Dad gulps. 'Um, no. Grandma is different.' Really? Why?" Why indeed.

■ I see that Kevin Phillips was over at a nearby Barnes & Noble the other day, pushing his book *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money*. It is the theocracy theme that gets the attention. According to a report in the *New York Sun*, Phillips says we are living in a period of "disenlightenment." He gave examples from "Galileo's disagreement with the papacy to contemporary debates over creationism and stem cells." It seems Galileo was a premature neo-Darwinist and supported the killing of human embryos for research purposes, or something like that. The report continues: "During the question and answer period, one person said that for

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most people the principles of religion are very uplifting. 'So what is wrong with a politician saying he gets guidance from religion?' she asked. 'You can state it that way and it's hard to disagree with,' Mr. Phillips said. 'But you could have asked the same question in the Catholic Inquisition: "Isn't religion a good thing?"' He elaborated by saying that religion may have been uplifting to many, but the Church in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries wanted to impose its beliefs on everybody else there. 'You're talking about the fringe elements,' the questioner persisted. 'Well, the fringe elements are very powerful at the present time,' Mr. Phillips replied."

■ It becomes wearying to point out that the Inquisition of the thirteenth century resulted in the deaths of about three people per year; that the Spanish Inquisition of the late fifteenth century was a matter of Crown policy and was significantly moderated by the Church; that at the time rulers thought that religious uniformity was necessary to the safety of the state; and that the same assumption in England, where there was no Inquisition, resulted in numerous deaths of both Protestants and Catholics. The Inquisition in its various forms over three hundred years accounted for fewer deaths—about three thousand in all, according to modern scholars—than the number of people killed on any given afternoon under the fanatically antireligious regimes of Stalin and Hitler. Yet in the hysterical polemics about the threat of an American theocracy, the Inquisition is right up there with the Gulag Archipelago and the Holocaust. Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying the Inquisition was a good thing. The pertinent fact, however, is that secular rulers believed heresy was a threat to the state and were determined to stamp it out. The Church, mainly in the form of the Dominicans, was enlisted to conduct legal inquiry (*inquisitio*) into whether an accused person was really guilty of heresy. Most of those charged were acquitted, and those who recanted their heresy were given penances of the same kind as those imposed in the Sacrament of Penance, such as fasting, pilgrimage, or the wearing of distinctive crosses on their clothes. Unlike other penances, those imposed by the Inquisition were legally enforceable. Should the Church have stepped in to moderate and bring under control the determination of rulers to stamp out heresy? Today almost everybody would say no. It is, however, no more than a chronological conceit of superior righteousness to claim that the answer was self-evident at the time. For St. Thomas More against Protestants, Queen Elizabeth against Catholics, and Ferdinand and Isabella against Jews and Muslims, there was no doubt that religious uniformity was essential to the well-being of the state. If an argument can be made that it was the case then, it is certainly not the case now. (For a reliable overview of the pertinent scholarship, see Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*.)

■ The great and audaciously new thing in the American founding is that for the first time in world history a state was established with the explicit provision that the religious beliefs and practices of the people are not the business of the government. That principle is embodied in the first freedom of the First Amendment, the free exercise of religion. It is a principle little understood by Kevin Phillips, Andrew Sullivan, and others who raise alarums about a threatening American "theocracy." Like the rulers of centuries past, they assert that the free exercise of religion is a threat to the public order. They don't come right out and put it that way, of course. Their argument is that people who have deep convictions that differ from their own should be, if those convictions are somehow grounded in a religious tradition, excluded from legitimate public discourse. As Lewis Lapham of *Harper's* recently put it with chilling candor, "We err on the side of folly if we continue to grant the boon of tolerance to [such] people." This, mind you, in the defense of liberalism.

■ "Well, the fringe elements are very powerful at the present time," says Mr. Phillips. The idea of government by the fringes was given currency last year by Garry Wills in a long article in the *New York Review of Books*. There Mr. Wills espied a vast conspiracy, in which your scribe plays a central role, that has enlisted the Vatican, the Southern Baptist Convention, George W. Bush, and I forget whom else in imposing on everybody the views of those who are, in fact, on the fringes of American public life. The trope of government by the fringes is wondrously amenable to the paranoid style in political discourse. The charm of the paranoid style is that it is not vulnerable to inconvenient facts. If, for example, it is pointed out that those who think their religion should be imposed on others are extremely marginal, the paranoid triumphantly replies, "Well, I said they were fringe elements, didn't I?" The fact that they are largely invisible only shows how devilishly devious they are.

■ What, finally, is the nature of this dreaded theocracy? A large number of Americans are actively engaged in democratically pressing for certain public policies. Most importantly, they argue that the unlimited abortion license imposed by *Roe* is egregiously unjust and must be remedied. They contend that same-sex marriage is a very bad idea that would do great damage to marriage and the family. They believe that students in

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the classroom should be free to, even encouraged to, raise questions about neo-Darwinist evolution. Some of them believe that the free exercise of religion should permit prayer in public schools. These are political positions, which is to say they are positions pertinent to what their advocates believe is the just ordering of society. Political arguments should be engaged by political arguments within the bond of civil discourse. Our constitutional order is in the service of deliberation and decision about political positions through the process of representative democracy. Those who disagree with the above positions are of course also participants in that process. Nobody is trying to drum them out of the public square. When Phillips, Sullivan, Wills, & Co. attempt to demonize those who disagree with them and deride their political opponents as "theocrats" and enemies of democracy, they are doing a profound disservice to the democracy that they claim to be defending. Demonizing opponents is a tactic of desperation. The public influence of these people and of the platforms available to them makes it hard to understand their apparent state of panic. They do have arguments to make and are, I believe, capable of making them. Robust and civil argument is to be warmly welcomed, whereas vulgar caricatures and name-calling are simply tedious.

■ Various Orthodox theologians, including the late Alexander Schmemann, have raised objections to the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation in the Eucharist. Some Catholic theologians, such as David Fagerberg, a former Lutheran, are sympathetic to these objections. "Transubstantiation," writes Fagerberg, "appears to be the process of removing something from the realm of nature into the realm of supernature, or turning natural stuff into super-stuff, under the suspicion that the natural world cannot function sacramentally. . . . When the West began exalting the change, it was only too easy to turn the sacrament into nature's exception instead of nature's perfection." The last is a nice turn of phrase. These matters are discussed in Matthew Levering's new book, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Sacrifice* (Blackwell). Levering, who teaches at Ave Maria University in Florida, takes the point made by Schmemann, Fagerberg, and others but argues that a fuller understanding of transubstantiation along the lines advanced by Thomas Aquinas does not separate the created order from the divine. Rather, transubstantiation, he says, very much includes the dimensions of grace perfecting nature, of redemption as the fulfillment of creation, and of our eucharistic incorporation into the life of God (deification). Levering's very scholarly and sometimes difficult argument is persuasive, but Fagerberg, who of course accepts the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation, is surely right in suggesting that, in popular catechesis and preaching, the Real Presence is often misunderstood as nature's exception rather than as nature's perfection.

■ For reasons I will not repeat here, I am opposed to capital punishment, believing it is warranted in only extremely rare circumstances. Yet I find myself in the odd position of frequently being portrayed as a supporter of capital punishment because I have on occasion publicly challenged the claims of some who oppose it. The most common claim, advanced by those who appear to be much more concerned about capital punishment than about abortion, is that the two are morally equivalent. This rather conveniently ignores, among other things, the difference between guilt and innocence. It is generally agreed that criminals should be punished. Nobody, or at least nobody I know, argues that the unborn baby should be punished. Although some feminists describe a pregnancy as an "unjust aggression." A further claim is that supporters of capital punishment are lacking in compassion. No doubt some of them are. It is chilling to see, as we sometimes do see, crowds outside prisons cheering an execution. This is not solemn punishment but gleeful vengeance. But some of the most blood-curdling statements I've read come from those claiming the moral high ground in their opposition to capital punishment. Some years ago, in the paper of the New York archdiocese, there was an editorial opposing the death penalty for a bombing in which children had been killed. The editor said the bomber should be locked in an isolation cell, fed on bread and water, and be forced to listen to high-volume simulations of the screams of his victims, without interruption, for the rest of his life. More recently, Michelle Cottle of the *New Republic* came out against the death penalty for Zacarias Moussaoui, the terrorist in the crash of Flight 93. He is, she says, a "sorry excuse for a human being" and "scum," but he does not deserve to die—"not because death would be too harsh a penalty, but because it would be too easy." She continues: "I mean, how bad can the idea of lethal injection be to a guy who was ready to fly a plane into a building? So while I personally believe that, in a just world, Moussauoi would be torn apart by angry ferrets, I can't help but question our rush to turn him into a shining example of martyrdom for all his aspiring terrorist pals. Better to throw the failed jihadist into a cell with a large, surly redneck with a scorching case of xenophobia and let him spend the rest of his miserable life learning about pain and terror firsthand." Whatever else may inform Ms. Cottle's opposition to capital punishment, it is hardly compassion. Principled

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defenders of the death penalty do not view criminals as subhuman scum or hatefully wish on them perpetual humiliation and suffering. Rather, they see the criminal as divinely endowed with human dignity and responsibility, and, precisely as such, required in justice to forfeit his life for the life or lives he has taken. As I say, I do not find that argument convincing, but it is the argument that needs to be engaged, and it is in sharpest contrast to the viciousness of the more-zealous opponents, and supporters, of capital punishment.

■ There was the Danish cartoon of Mohammed with a time bomb in his turban, for which Europe collectively apologized after Muslim protests that killed some thirty people. Now an Italian magazine, *Studi Cattolici*, publishes an illustration showing Mohammed in hell. It is based on Dante's *Divine Comedy* in which the poet and Virgil are looking down at Mohammed, who is cut in half because he divided the world into hostile camps. The magazine is not published by Opus Dei, but the editor is a member. Opus Dei has some experience with being caricatured, as in *The Da Vinci Code*. The Rome office of Opus Dei said: "We consider it deplorable that this cartoon should appear in a magazine that has the name Catholic in its title. Its publication shows a lack of sensitivity and Christian charity. Although Opus Dei has no responsibility for this magazine, and each person is responsible for his or her own actions, we wish to ask forgiveness for the offense again." If Opus Dei has no responsibility for the action, it is not clear why it is asking forgiveness for it. And it does seem a bit presumptuous for Opus Dei to be accusing Dante Alighieri and what many consider the greatest literary achievement of Western civilization of a lack of sensitivity and Christian charity. Plus, according to Catholic teaching, it is distinctly possible that Mohammed is in hell. "The only road to peace and brotherhood," says Opus Dei, "is respect for others' convictions and practices." One might suggest, to the contrary, that the only road to peace and brotherhood is to respect the human dignity of people whose convictions and practices may lead them to hell. It is a pity to see Opus Dei going squishy on Catholic theology and becoming a party to the emergence of Eurabia. The jihadists will be pleased.

■ Peter J. Boyer of the *New Yorker* is a journalist of distinction. I have previously commented on his article on the rise of orthodoxy among younger Catholics (Public Square, August/September 2005). In the April 17 issue, he has a fine article on Anglicanism, "A Church Asunder." Boyer does not tip his hand as to whose side he is on, and he frequently employs standard liberal vocabulary in, for instance, describing disagreements in terms of "progressives" versus "traditionalists"—which I suppose is mandatory in the world of the *New Yorker*—but he has a rare gift for capturing the nuances of personalities and positions. The article is well worth reading. There is this, for instance: A commission report to the General Convention this June suggests that the church might retreat from, or at least fudge, the formal blessing of gay unions and the ordination of more gay bishops in order not to be excluded from the worldwide Anglican Communion. Boyer talked with the communications director of a liberal diocese who is strongly opposed to any "compromise." He said, "What is the message we push to explain our desire to stay in the Anglican Communion? What is the slogan we put on our literature? Here is what I have come up with: 'Join us in a diplomatically intricate, ethically ambiguous, and sometimes publicly humiliating tightrope walk toward Jesus.' I think it needs work."

■ Boyer's article includes a profile of Gene Robinson, the gay bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson started life under most difficult circumstances, almost dying in childbirth. His parents were very poor, growing tobacco in the South, and his mother, not expecting the baby to live, gave him a girl's name, Vicky Gene. Speaking with Boyer about the crisis that his election as bishop has precipitated for the church and describing what is at stake, Robinson says, "What most people don't realize is that homosexuality is something that I am, it's not something that I do. It's at the very core of who I am. We're not talking about taking a liberal or conservative stance on a particular issue; we're talking about who I am." Think about it.

■ Accept the epithet and wear it as a badge of honor. That's the counsel of Ross Douthat, associate editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* in an essay titled "Theocon Moment," he says, "Perhaps it's time for religious conservatives to stop complaining about the term 'theoconservative'—coined by Jacob Heilbrunn in 1996 and popularized by Andrew Sullivan and others—and accept it with a wink and a grin, as the kind of backhanded compliment that any successful movement earns from its opponents." At present, he says, "the closest thing to a credible public philosophy the GOP has to offer emanates from the once-unlikely alliance of evangelicals and Catholics, and their God-infused politics of social reform." It is, he says, a program of social reform that is on offer, in the tradition of "the abolitionists and populists, and progressives and the suffragettes, the civil-rights crusaders and even the antiwar activism of the middle 1960s, where Richard

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John Neuhaus (now the 'theocon-in-chief' to his enemies, but then a man of the religious left) cut his teeth." Douthat continues: "Like the Victorian reformers who strove to mitigate the worst consequences of the Industrial Revolution, religious conservatism, at its best, is a response to the excesses of the sexual revolution—the fatherless children and broken homes, the millions of abortions and the commodification of human life. The eras aren't parallel, but there are similarities: The Victorian reformers passed the laws against abortion that 'theocons' yearn to restore, and waged war against the same kind of crude, politicized Darwinism that's associated with the contemporary culture of death." The theocons, he says, have made a difference: "Given these obstacles, religious conservatives have made great strides—but for now, at least, they have changed American politics without fundamentally changing America. There have been gains: The abortion rate has dropped, and the country is marginally more pro-life than 30 years ago; the divorce rate has dropped as well; and the erosion of religious faith that prompted *Time* magazine to ponder the death of God has been halted, though not necessarily reversed. The push for euthanasia has been largely turned back so far, and if the courts are not yet prepared to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, there is greater reason for pro-life hope than in the 1970s or the Clinton years." If this keeps up, says Douthat, "there's a good chance that the 'theocons'—like the Progressives or the civil-rights reformers before them—will some day be able to look back over the patient work of decades and see a nation transformed by their labors."

■ I suppose it is possible. But I don't think I'll go along with being called a theocon, not even accepting it with "a wink and a grin." To too many, the term inevitably implies theocracy, which is the very opposite of what my friends and I have been contending for all these years. I will never tire of insisting that the alternative to the naked public square is not the sacred public square but the civil public square. The purpose is to renew the liberal democratic tradition by, among other things, opening the public square to the full and civil engagement of the convictions of all citizens, including their religiously informed moral convictions. I am guilty as charged by some conservatives: I am a liberal democrat. For instance, I have argued over the decades that the pro-life position is the position of a liberalism that has an inclusive definition of the community, including unborn children, for which we accept common responsibility. Similarly, it is the liberal position to support the right of parents to decide how their children should be educated through vouchers or other instruments of parental choice. On these and many other questions, liberalism was radically redefined beginning in the 1960s, with the ironic result that I and others of like conviction are called conservatives. Our cause is the restoration and renewal of the liberal democratic tradition, which is the greatest political achievement of our civilization. There is another and more important reason why I will continue to decline the "theocon" label. No political cause and no political order deserves to bear the name of God. That honor is reserved to the Church of Jesus Christ, which in its faith and eucharistic liturgy enacts and anticipates the authentically new politics of the promised kingdom of God. America is a nation *under* God, but not even at its very best is it God's nation. And so, while I appreciate Mr. Douthat's hopeful account of our influence, and while I know that critics will continue to use the term, I will just as persistently—and, I hope, gracefully—protest being called a theocon.

■ The president of the United Church of Christ, John Thomas, has gained some prominence for his attacks on conservative Christians, and on the Institute on Religion and Democracy in particular, who, he says, are trying to take over the oldline Protestant denominations. You may have seen the United Church of Christ television ads that show racial minorities, homosexuals, and handicapped people being rocketed out of church pews in conservative churches by the use of "ejector seats." This is in contrast, of course, to the very inclusive United Church of Christ which welcomes everybody. In the last four decades, United Church of Christ membership has declined from 2.2 million to 1.2 million. And that's without the use of ejector seats.

■ We all owe an enormous debt to Paul Hollander, now emeritus at the University of Massachusetts. Over the years, he has tirelessly chronicled the atrocities of our time, and the ways in which so many American intellectuals have been gulled, willingly in many cases, by their perpetrators. His 1981 book *Political Pilgrims* analyzes the ways in which otherwise bright people were blinded by ideology to monumental crimes against humanity. Now Hollander has edited *From the Gulag to the Killing Fields: Personal Accounts of Political Violence and Repression in Communist States,* an anthology of almost 800 pages, published by ISI Books. From the Soviet Union to Poland, Rumania, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Cuba, those who were imprisoned, tortured, and slated for death bear witness to the malignant power of an ideology that is guilty of at least 100 million political murders. Some of the names are well known, such as Alexander Solzhen-

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itsyn and Vladimir Bukovsky, but most will be new to most readers. The book bears a foreword by Anne Applebaum, author of *Gulag: A History*, which won a well-deserved Pulitzer for nonfiction in 2004. These testimonials to the human capacity for murderous madness must never be forgotten if we are to reduce the chances of such crimes being committed in the future.

■ In his extended introduction to *From the Gulag to the Killing Fields*, Hollander cites a study by the late Edward Shils of the similarities in beliefs and attitudes between the extreme ideological right and the extreme ideological left. His examples are drawn from Nazism and Communism, but the analysis applies to situations of ideological and political polarization more generally. Shils focuses on these characteristics: (1) Extreme hostility to "outgroups." You are either for us or against us. Dialogue or civil conversation with the "enemy" is betrayal. (2) Complete submissiveness to "ingroups." Our party and its leaders are to be supported without question. Criticism of our side is breaking ranks, and breaking ranks is treason. (3) All relationships are subordinated to the criterion of what will advance the "cause." (4) The most important thing to know about the world is that it is divided by the conflict between them and us. (5) Purely theoretical ideas that do not clearly serve the cause are to be repressed. (6) The expression of sentiment is a sign of weakness. (7) We and our group can survive only by the manipulation of others, who are there to be manipulated. (8) The triumph of the cause will result in a harmonious world without conflict. There are some differences between causes, of course, as there were significant differences between Nazism and Communism. For all the talk about our polarized circumstance—about culture wars, the religious right, and threats posed by theocrats and secular humanists— we are far from those forms of political madness. Yet we deceive ourselves if we deny the possibility of being overwhelmed by fanaticism. It can happen here. Fanaticism, it is worth remembering, comes from *fanum*, referring to the pagan temple in which people worked themselves into an orgy of frenzied ecstasy. There is a seductive pleasure in hating, and hating absolutely. To judge by some of the vicious messages received in this office—and, I am sure, received also by those on the other side of controverted issues—more people than we would like to think are susceptible to that seduction. Securing the bonds of civility within which we engage our differences is a never-ending task.

■ A reader sends a newspaper clipping of an article that contains some notably ungenerous comments about this magazine and its editor in chief. He included in his letter the following excerpt from John Milton. Perhaps you, too, will discover in it a wisdom conducing to serene endurance. Not, mind you, that I fancy myself oppressed. It is the patience that we need ever to learn anew.

Oh how comely it is and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honour truth;
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed;
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who surprised
Lose their defence distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict;
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.

Sources: Incompetent reviews, *Publishers Weekly*, April 17. Karen Armstrong, *New York Times*, April 21. Tony Judt on Walt and Mearsheimer, *New York Times*, April 19. Abe Foxman on Judt, *New York Times*, April 22. Prayer study, *New York Times*, April 11. Artistic cadavers on display, *New York Times*, April 19. Capital punishment, *OpinionJournal*, April 14. Another Mohammed cartoon, ZENIT, April 16. Ross Douthat on accepting the epithet of theocon, *Wall Street Journal*, April 6.

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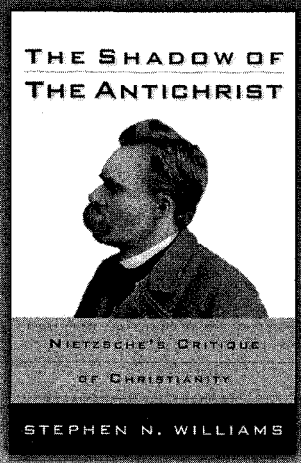

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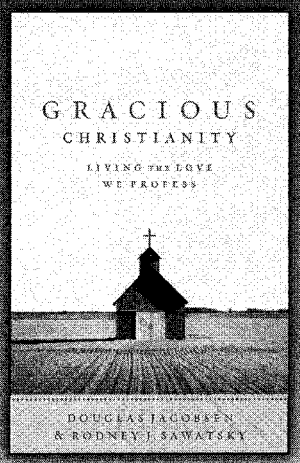

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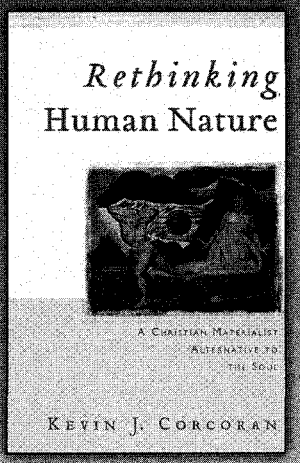

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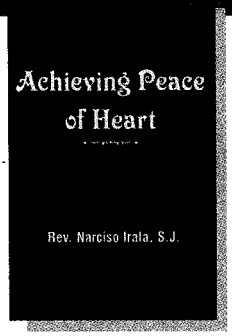

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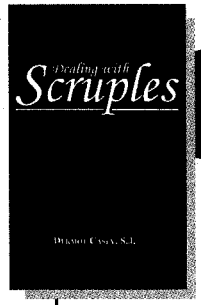

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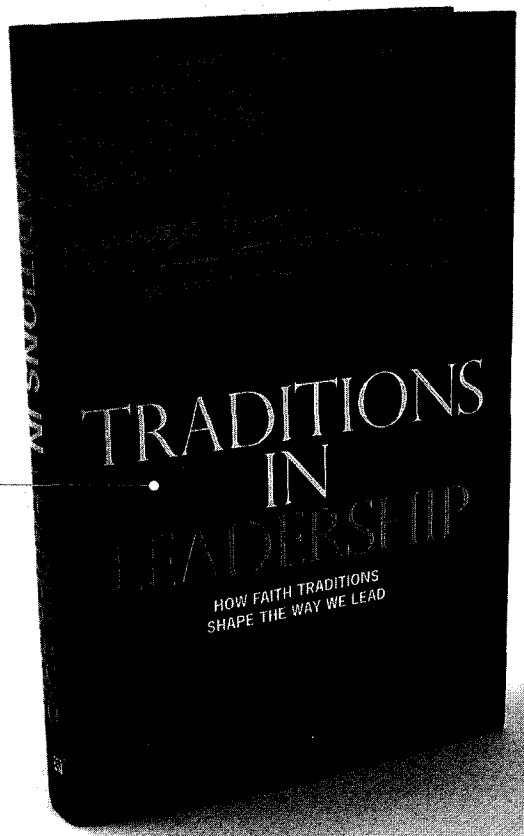

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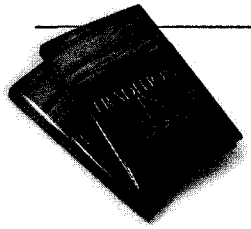

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